

SONSHIP FOR AFRICA: DISCIPLESHIP BY GRACE

A THESIS

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JOHN WADE LONG, JR.

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To the Glory of God in Loving Memory of

The Reverend C. John "Jack" Miller, Ph.D.

1928 – 1996

Jack was our teacher and mentor in the Gospel, a weak-strongman, a catalyst for revival, and a sinner—just like us. The Gospel is for sinners, and it was his view of the greatness of his own sin, and the limitless mercy of Christ, that gave us the courage to admit that we were “big, needy sinners”—just like him. His repentances taught us to repent. His brokenness moved us to be broken. His dependence on the Spirit challenged us to depend on the Spirit. He led us—foolish, bewitched, puffed-up, praise-loving, man-fearing, self-reliant Galatianized¹ pastors, out of our cold orthodoxy and back to our first love² for the Savior. He preached the Gospel to us, proud professionals who needed reminding that Christ is the end of the struggle for righteousness³—that God counts us righteous for the sake of his Son, not for what we do. He preached it until our false motives were exposed, and we learned to be big repenters instead of great pretenders. He preached it until our cold-hearted compliance to the law was replaced by the obedience that comes from faith⁴.

Jack insisted that God was a welcoming Father who delighted in us as his sons.⁵ He preached that until we could “hear the music” and the *Abba-Father* cry of sonship⁶ was the song of our hearts.⁷ He preached it until we shared his passion to live for the glory of God—until our hearts burned like his that “the word of the Lord run and be glorified.”⁸

But we are so weak! Jack was weak, and that is the point: our sufficiency is of God, not of ourselves,⁹ and he will use us in spite of ourselves. By his grace, we will never turn back to our old ways of self-reliance—never. May he keep us faithful as we pass on to you the manner of life we have received: new life in his Son, new life energized by repentant, dependent, childlike faith. As promised, the Spirit will bless such faith with his fruit—the power to love others like Christ¹⁰ loved them—a love which fulfills the whole Law.¹¹

May God get great glory¹² as we take the free offer of the Gospel of Christ crucified, risen, reigning, and returning, to the ends of the earth—a Gospel for the renewal of the church, and the salvation of the world.¹³

John Wade Long, Jr.

Nairobi, 7 April, 1998

But when the time had fully come, God sent forth his Son, born of a woman, born under law, to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons. And because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who cries out, “Abba, Father.” So you are no longer a slave, but a son; and since you are a son, God has also made you an heir. – Galatians 4:4-7

For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship, and by him we cry, “Abba, Father!” – Romans 8:15



¹Galatians 3:1-5; ²Revelation 2:4; ³Romans 10:4; ⁴Romans 1:5; ⁵Isaiah 62:4-5; ⁶Galatians 4:6;

⁷Romans 8:15; ⁸II Thessalonians 3:1; ⁹II Corinthians 3:1-6; ¹⁰Galatians 5:6;

¹¹Romans 13:8-10; ¹²Ezekiel 36:22, 23; ¹³Matthew 28:18-20

You foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? After beginning with the Spirit, are you now trying to attain your goal by human effort?

The Apostle Paul

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PREFACE

The Protestant Reformation restored the doctrine of justification by faith to the Church, but nearly five-hundred years later we have important theological business lying unfinished on our plate: we have got the means of salvation right, but we are still confused about the means of *sanctification*. We boast in our creed: *Sola Fide! Sola Gratia! Sola Scriptura!* but flirt with an ancient and deadly heresy—legalism. Worse, we have exported our confusion around the globe. In Africa it has spread rapidly and mutated into a more virulent form of theology in which holiness is trivialized, self-righteousness abounds, law is king, and the integrity of the message of grace is compromised. Legalism has rushed in to fill this Gospel vacuum, and as a result, we have a crippled church, unable to fulfill God's New Covenant mandate—that we glorify his holy name through holy lives before the eyes of the nations (Ezek. 36:22, 23).

As the twenty-first century dawns, the church in Africa is locked in a desperate struggle with two powerful enemies which threaten her existence. Islam, the one she can see, is taking previously "Christian" territory at an alarming rate. But far more dangerous is the enemy within—a legalized Christianity which defines holiness as keeping rules and regulations—God's (outwardly), man's, or some combination of the two. In this system, it is rule-keeping, not grace, on which one depends to maintain his standing before God and the church. The heresy may have begun innocently with a rule here and another rule there, but the lesson of history is that legalism, be it Jewish or Christian, is a systemic, metastatic disease that kills persons, families, congregations and denominations. The list of rules never shrinks, but grows in length and complexity. In many churches the teaching is indistinguishable from Islamic

moralism. Tragically, the church has been left with a Christ who cannot completely save—and, the inevitable question: if he cannot save completely, can he save at all?

We need a radical reformation in Africa; half-way measures will not do. In his *True Spirituality*, Francis Schaeffer noted five reasons many of us Christians don't bear the fruit we should. The fifth is: "We may never have been taught that there is a reality of faith *to be acted on consciously* after justification. This last point is the point of ignorance of many who stand in the orthodox and historic stream of the Reformation" (1970, 84). The problem is that self-deception is self-deceiving. We *think* we know how to bear the fruit of holiness: try hard to keep all the rules.

The church must rediscover and embrace the doctrines of justification by faith *and* sanctification by faith with Biblical clarity and precision. In this thesis, we will major on sanctification, and with good reason. We Protestants know to guard the front door of justification. We learned that lesson well. But, proud of our vigilance, we have left the back door of sanctification unattended. As we shall see, these two doctrines are so inextricably linked that an error in one always corrupts the other, so we still lose the battle. Here in Africa, as in first-century Galatia, it is difficult to discern which of these truths was compromised first. Did the Judaizers really mean to suggest that Gentile Christians could *earn God's forgiveness* by submitting to circumcision (a justification issue)? Or, were they teaching something that seemed more benign—that circumcision and the keeping of certain parts of the ceremonial law could make these new believers just a degree more holy and therefore more lovely in the eyes of God (ostensibly an issue of sanctification)? We will investigate that question in chapter six.

Regardless of how the problem began, here in Africa we must work with what *is*, namely: the impression abounds that although "a decision for Christ" may get you into the Kingdom of God, to stay in, you must keep the law, and that means not only the Ten

Commandments (which most Christians here or in the West cannot recite), but whatever other commandments your denomination, your sect, or your local congregation might add to them. Lawkeeping and Christianity have become virtually synonymous. Measuring up, not believing, is paramount.

But legalism is not the only concern. Whenever the role of the law in the Christian life is discussed, the opposite error of antinomianism lurks in the shadows. So, let us be clear: when we insist, as we do, that sanctification is “by faith, apart from the works of the law,” we are not raising the question, “*should we or should we not keep the law of God?*” Some things are not open to debate, and the moral law of God is one of them. When the Apostle Paul wrote repeatedly that we are “not under law” (Rom. 6:14, 15; 7:14; Gal. 5:18) he never intended to imply that believers in Jesus have received an exemption from the moral law. We are required to keep the law, and with good reason: the Ten Commandments are an expression of the perfect and eternal will of God for his people. We must not worship idols or take God’s name in vain; we must not murder, commit adultery or steal another’s property—ever. Indeed, one principal reason heaven will *be* heaven, is that there, in God’s holy presence, his law will be perfectly kept, by everyone, all the time. The antinomian who despises God’s law and the legalist who attempts to find life by it are both heretical. But having said that, other questions arise. What constitutes genuine obedience to the moral law? How may we be enabled to keep it? And, what is the proper role of the law—any law—in the Christian life?

Finally, we need to ask, does Africa need *SONSHIP for Africa*? Academicians have been known to appoint themselves as rescuers—only to discover (after much exertion) that the “victim” was swimming, not drowning. As for the need, the answer is “yes.” The theological and resulting moral crisis in the church in Africa is real, and we have every confidence that this thesis contains the real solution. Our confidence is not in ourselves, but in the

life-transforming power the Spirit of God unleashes in a life when the Gospel is heard and believed. Our task, then, is to help the church recover, theoretically and practically, the doctrines of justification by faith apart from the works of the law (Rom. 3:28), and sanctification by faith, apart from the works of the law (Gal.3:1-5).

In addition to treating the problem theologically, we will integrate what the Bible says about how we are *saved* and how we *grow* in holiness, in a practical, culturally contextualized and readily transferrable course of discipleship. This will give the church in Africa a hands-on tool for personal and corporate spiritual renewal in their personal, family and congregational lives. For the Glory of God and the blessing of his church, we offer this work in three parts.

Part I, *The Law, The Spirit and Faith In Sanctification*, is a seven-chapter theological study that sets forth the view of sanctification which undergirds the *SONSHIP for Africa* discipleship course. Chapter 1 is introductory. It defines the doctrines of justification and sanctification, and demonstrates their organic interrelatedness. Chapter 2, The Means of Sanctification, compares and contrasts the two popular views of the means of sanctification. Chapter 3 sets forth the role of the moral law in New Covenant life, defining the proper uses and misuses of "the three uses." Chapter 4 sets forth love as the fulfillment of the law. Chapter 5 examines the implications of the Pauline phrase, "the obedience of faith." Chapter 6 is a study of the Galatian controversy. Chapter 7 presents examples of preaching, teaching, and parenting which demonstrate the principle of sanctification by faith in concrete terms.

Part II, *SONSHIP for Africa: The Discipleship Course for Disciples* is the praxis, a stand-alone manual comprised of a sixteen-lesson course in spiritual renewal designed to balance sanctification by faith in theory and practice so that we understand and are empowered to live "in the new way of the Spirit, and not in the old way of the written code" (Rom. 7:6). Whereas our flesh would have us live in fear, serve God out of duty, rely on our own

strength, and live for the praise of men, the Gospel calls us to a new life of obedience, fueled by faith, marked by love, dependent on the Spirit, and lived with passion for the glory of God. This course leads us in the daily exercise of what the *Westminster Confession of Faith* calls “a true and lively faith” in Christ. Such faith, based on our free justification, is blessed by the Holy Spirit so that we grow in the knowledge of Christ, and the likeness of Christ. Specific objectives are: growth in [a] childlike trust in, and intimacy with God as his sons; [b] the end of our struggle for righteousness through daily trust in the righteousness of Christ, [c] personal relationships in our families and congregations marked by repentance and forgiveness, [d] dependence on the Holy Spirit rather than our own moral willpower to live the Christian life and do the work of the ministry, [e] a style of evangelism in which we as needy saved sinners humbly share Christ with needy lost sinners, and, [f] a style of leadership that elicits obedience with a basin and towel instead of threats and warnings (Jn. 13:5; Heb. 12:18).

Part III, *A Discippler's Guide for SONSHIP for Africa* completes the discipleship cycle: “The things which you have heard from me . . . these entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also” (II Tim. 2:2b, NASB). The *Guide* provides each new generation of *Sonship* graduates with detailed instructions for teaching the course, including: a concise outline of the lesson, a conceptual summary, and step-by-step instructions for each class period. Interspersed throughout are exhortations to help leaders remain faithful to their calling as “wounded healers”—men and women who minister out of their own brokenness as they pass on the model of faith and life they have received.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to thank those who gave me back the Gospel: Dr. C. John Miller, his wife Rose Marie, and their son Paul, who in 1986 developed *Sonship Training*—the catalyst for my spiritual renewal, and the conceptual model for *SONSHIP for Africa*. My very special thanks goes to Dave McCarty of World Harvest Mission, who mentored my wife Becky and me through the first tumultuous months of our renewal, bottle-fed us with the Gospel of grace; “changed our spiritual diapers;” challenged us to live lives of ongoing repentance; encouraged us to disciple others by grace, and, in spite of our weaknesses, recruited us to join the staff of one of the most unique missionary communities God has raised up in this century.

I wish to thank my professors, Drs. Richard Lovelace and Raymond Pendleton for their stimulating classroom instruction and personal friendship. The books of Dr. Lovelace have been seminal to my understanding of sanctification, and continue to serve as valuable references and constant paper-companions (they look like rags) on my travels around Africa. Dr. Pendleton’s teaching “rattled my cage” and expanded my vision for the spiritual renewal of whole congregational systems. With that vision he supplied the tools for initiating such a ministry—tools that had been missing from my kit for far too many years.

I wish to thank my students, especially those of Daystar University, Nairobi International School of Theology, and Nairobi Evangelical Graduate School of Theology. Their joyful responses to, and constructive criticisms of this material during its development, have greatly enhanced its relevance to African hearts and lives.

I wish to thank World Harvest Mission and the Altadena Valley Presbyterian Church of Birmingham, Alabama USA who collaborated to make this course of study possible. For their

love, prayer, words of encouragement, and financial support we are deeply grateful. Their vision to enhance our academic qualifications is already bearing fruit: we have personally grown in our love of Christ and our ability to communicate his Gospel; there is a growing demand for *SONSHIP for Africa* by churches and theological institutions as they see God using it to renew his people; and, new doors of opportunity are opening up for our teaching ministry throughout the continent.

I wish to thank my wife. As helpful as this “great cloud of witnesses” has been, my highest praise is reserved for Becky: for her partnership in the Gospel, her extraordinary support and patience during these years of study, and, for her invaluable suggestions which have made this still imperfect work, a more useful tool of the Spirit for restoring the *Abba-Father!* cry to the hearts of God’s beloved sons and daughters.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BH	<i>Biblia Hebraica</i> . 1937 ed. Rudolph Kittel
ERF	<i>Encyclopedia of the Reformed Faith</i> . 1992
KA26	<i>Greek New Testament</i> . ed. Kurt Aland, et. al. 26th Edition 1983
JKV	<i>King James Version of the Bible</i> . 1611
NAB	<i>New American Standard Bible</i> . 1901
NASB	<i>New American Standard Bible</i> . 1960
NDT	<i>New Dictionary of Theology</i> . 1988
NICNT	<i>New International Commentary on the New Testament</i> (series)
NIDCC	<i>New International Dictionary of the Christian Church</i> . 1974
NIDNTT	<i>The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology</i> . 1978
NIV	<i>New International Version of the Bible</i>
OPC	Orthodox Presbyterian Church
PCA	Presbyterian Church in America
PCF	Philadelphia Confession of Faith (The London Confession)
PCUS	Presbyterian Church in the United States (merged UPC, now PCUSA)
RPCES	Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod (received into PCA)
TWOT	<i>Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament</i> . 1980
WCF	<i>Westminster Confession of Faith</i> . 1647

EDITORIAL METHOD

The following are explanations of the manner in which a number of terms are used and punctuated; notes on the formatting, method of reference citation for Parts II and III of the thesis, and notes on the author's

1. Gospel, Good News. These are always capitalized and refer to the New Covenant message of salvation in Jesus Christ.

2. Old Covenant, New Covenant. These are always capitalized and refer respectively to the administration of the law recorded in the Old Testament Scriptures, and the administration of the Gospel promised in the Old and fulfilled in the New Testament Scriptures

3. he, him, his. Pronouns which refer to God in any of his persons will not be capitalized except when quoted sources have done so, or in references to God where confusion might otherwise result.

4. Biblical is capitalized. In Africa it is considered disrespectful to do otherwise.

5. *Sonship*, *SONSHIP for Africa* (*SONSHIP*). These refer to separate works. *Sonship*, in lower case, refers to the discipleship course produced by World Harvest Mission of Philadelphia, PA, USA in 1988 and 1993 (VHS video lectures with an accompanying notebook). *SONSHIP for Africa* (or, *SONSHIP*) refers to Part II of this thesis, a new work produced by the author in Africa for Africa under the auspices of World Harvest Mission. Where concepts or articles from the original American *Sonship* course are used herein, credit is given to the originator of the concept or author of the material, and noted on the relevant page of the *SONSHIP for Africa* manual.

6. Biblical quotations are from the New International Version (NIV) unless otherwise specified. (see list of Abbreviations)

7. Parts II and III of this thesis are the actual field versions of *SONSHIP for Africa*, and *A DISCIPLER'S GUIDE for SONSHIP for Africa*, and as such, their margins, type-faces, pagination and other formatting characteristics are retained by agreement of the author's thesis committee.

8. As to citations: the sixteen individual lessons of the *SONSHIP for Africa* course are frequently distributed separately to students over a period of time, therefore the origin of each quoted source is cited as it occurs. The "SOURCES CITED," which includes works quoted in all three parts of the thesis is located at the end of Part I (bound Volume 1). Works cited in Part II *only* (*SONSHIP for Africa*), are marked by a dagger [†]. Bound Volume 2 contains Parts II and III of the thesis together with a specialized bibliography for those parts.

9. As to pagination: all parts of the thesis are numbered sequentially at the *bottom center* of each page with a 12 point numeral in the Times Roman font (e.g. i, ii, iii; 1, 2, 3, etc.). The instruction manuals, parts II and III, require their own internal pagination which is found at the lower right margin of the page in a 10 point Avalon (sans serif) font. Internal pagination can be clearly differentiated by the "S" prefix for *SONSHIP* in Part I (e.g. S1-1, S1-2, etc.), and by the "SDG" prefix for *SONSHIP Discippler's Guide* in Part IIi (e.g. SDG-1, SDG-2, etc.). The "Table of Contents" on page 269 (Part II) presents both pagination schemes side-by-side.

10. Parts I and III contain no illustrations. Part II, the *SONSHIP for Africa* course is highly illustrated, therefore the LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS is found at the end of Part II on page 571.

ABSTRACT

This work address theoretically and practically the spirit and practice of legalism that is undermining the Gospel of grace in the church in Africa. In the theological brief, *The Law, The Spirit, and Faith In Sanctification* (Part I), our purpose is to clarify and affirm what the Scriptures teach concerning the *nature* and *means of* sanctification, and the *proper role of the law* in New Covenant life. Our thesis is: Faith in Christ is the sole *instrument* of sanctification. Here, two especially pernicious heresies must be avoided: legalism—the attempt to gain *or* maintain standing with God by “the works of the law” (Gal. 3:1-5)—and its opposite, anti-nomianism—holding that the moral law is irrelevant (Matt. 5:19). As we navigate our way between these extremes, other questions logically arise as to the manner and extent that the Law, the Spirit, and faith are operative and cooperative for growth in holiness. For example: (Q. 1) Understanding as we do that “the law is spiritual,” what constitutes a true and full obedience to it—beyond keeping the bare commandments? (Q.2) Seeing that the law can neither save nor sanctify us, what role should it play in our *conscious* life as New Covenant believers? (Q. 3) By what agency and means are we *able* or *enabled* to increase in sanctification—considering the power of indwelling sin that remains in us? (Q. 4) How does faith, the *instrument* of sanctification, avail itself of the power of the Holy Spirit, the *agent* of sanctification, to further a life of loving obedience to the glory of God?

Having gained a biblical and theological understanding of the process of sanctification, in Part II, we present a practical course of instruction for expressing that theology in life: *SONSHIP for Africa: The Discipleship Course for Disciplers*. In Part III, *A Disciple's Guide for SONSHIP for Africa*, we teach teachers of the course how to mentor others in the model of faith and life they have received—glorifying God through “the obedience that comes from faith” (Rom. 1:5).

PART I

THE LAW, THE SPIRIT AND FAITH IN SANCTIFICATION

An Introduction to Sonship for Africa

CHAPTER 1
JUSTIFICATION AND SANCTIFICATION
Defined and Related

A. Justification Defined and Explained

Introduction

Before we proceed to the primary task of this thesis, to study of the means of sanctification, we must examine its foundation—the doctrine of justification. The two are as inseparably connected as the hidden and visible parts of a tree. Justification is the essential root; sanctification is its inevitable fruit. Justification is pointless if it does not result in holiness, and holiness cannot exist outside the context of justification.

But the relationship of these doctrines goes beyond the purely theoretical to the intensely practical. Christians who pursue holiness (Heb. 12:14) apart from a constant, conscious resting in their free justification are doomed to frustration and failure. Godliness may be aspired to, claimed, and quite convincingly imitated, but if it does not flow from a dependent, personal, daily relationship with God the Father, through Christ, by the Holy Spirit, it will be faulty in motive and manner—a pale imitation of the real thing. “Holiness” which flows from self effort cannot bring glory to God, bless his church, or attract the lost to Christ.

Our first work, then, is to define these two doctrines, demonstrate their organic interrelatedness, and explain their legal and affective results. Then we will be prepared for our main task which is to set forth and defend our thesis: that faith in Christ is *the instrumental means* of spiritual growth—that the same faith that justifies us sanctifies us.

1. Justification Defined

The words “justify” and “justification” have to do with persons or their actions being declared right or righteous. We frequently use these words in non-theological senses, for example: “He is trying to justify himself,” that is, trying to make himself appear right, or righteous. In the world of civil law, “justify” and “justification” refer to the formal declaration of a judge or court of law that some person or their action is justified. Thus, if a human life is taken in certain defensive circumstances, it may be termed a “justifiable homicide.”

a) The Primary Biblical Terms for Justification

Our concern is the theological and particularly the soteriological sense of these terms. In the Scriptures, “justify” (verb) and “justification” (noun) are legal terms used to describe God’s work as the Righteous Judge. He “justifies” us—truly guilty sinners—by declaring us to be righteous in his sight, and therefore free from the penalty due to us for our sins.

The Old Testament verb root is *tsadaq* (צדק), “to be righteous, just.” The parent noun is *tsedek* (צדק), justice, righteousness (TWOT 1980,752). Usage: In Isaiah 53:11 the work of the Messiah is foretold: “By his knowledge the Righteous One, My Servant, will justify the many, as he will bear their iniquities” (NASB), or, “make many to be accounted righteous” (RSV). Habakuk 2:4, “...but the righteous will live by his faith” (בְּאִמּוּנָתוֹ יֵחִיד); וְצַדִּיק - lit. “and the righteous, by faith of him, will live” - BH 1937, 947).

The New Testament verb is *dikaioo* (δικαίω), “to justify” or “to make righteous.” The adjective form is *dikaioo*, (δικαίος), “righteous” (DNTT, 354). Usage: “The Scripture foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles by faith...(Gal. 3:8).” Significantly, Paul quotes Habakuk 2:4 in Romans 1:17: “But the righteous [man] shall live by faith.”

b) Theological Definitions of Justification

Following are three definitions of justification which move from the very simple (a child's catechism) to the more complete and complex. These sources demonstrate the high level of agreement among Evangelical and Reformed Christians regarding the definition of justification.

(1) *Catechism for Young Children* (Presbyterian)

Q. 50 What is justification?

A. It is God's forgiving sinners, and treating them as if they had never sinned.
(n.d., 13)

(2) *Keach's Catechism* (Baptist, from the *Philadelphia Confession of Faith*, 1742)

Q. 37 What is justification?

A. Justification is an act of God's free grace, wherein he pardons all our sins, and accepts us as righteous in his sight, only for the righteousness of Christ imputed to us, and received by faith alone. (Rom. 3:24; Eph. 1:7; 2 Cor. 5:21; Rom. 5:19; Phil. 3:9; Gal. 2:16) (n.d., 24)

(3) *Summary of Christian Doctrine* – Lois Berkhof (Dutch Reformed)

Justification may be defined as that legal act of God by which He declares the sinner righteous on the basis of the perfect righteousness of Jesus Christ. It is not an act or process of renewal, such as regeneration, conversion, or sanctification, and does not affect the condition but the state of the sinner. It differs from sanctification in several particulars. Justification takes place outside of the sinner in the tribunal of God, removes the guilt of sin, and is an act which is complete at once and for all time; while sanctification takes place in man, removes the pollution of sin, and is a continuous and lifelong process. We distinguish two elements in justification, namely:
(a) The forgiveness of sins on the basis of the righteousness of Jesus Christ...
(b) The adoption as children of God (1938, 138).

Notice that Keach's and Berkhof's definitions add information about the *ground* (the basis) and the *means* (the instrument) of justification. The *ground* of our justification is the atoning work of Christ on the cross; the *means* of our justification is faith in that work—completely apart from any works of our own.

2. Justification in Islam: Chief Rival of the Christian Faith in Africa

Justification by faith alone sets the Christian Gospel apart from all the other spiritual systems of the world. It is for that reason we Christians feel uncomfortable when our faith is referred to as “a religion.” “Religion” has the connotation of man seeking God. Our faith, the Christian faith, did not originate with man, but is revelatory in character, and based on the fact that God, the sovereign Creator of all is seeking man. We are respondents to God’s initiative to us in Christ—not the initiators of the relationship. Our response is faith, and therefore ours is *not* a religion, but a faith. Islam, on the other hand, presents a good face, talks much about the need for faith, and agrees that in order for a man to escape the judgment of God, there must be an atonement made for his sins. The nature of Islamic atonement, however, is self-atonement—by works. Islam and Christianity, then, differ fundamentally and absolutely in their doctrines of salvation. Still, it surprises Christians that the Qur’an says so much, and so much *good* about Jesus, but since the book was written in the Near East more than six-hundred years *after* Christ’s resurrection, this should not be surprising. The Qur’an teaches that Jesus was a true prophet of the Creator Allah (*Holy Qur’an* 1989, Surah Al-Imran 3:79), and that his birth was announced to a *virgin* named Mary who conceived Jesus by the Holy Spirit (1989, Surah Al-Imran 3:47, footnotes):

Oh Mary! Allah giveth thee Glad tidings of a Word from Him: his name will be Messiah Jesus, The son of Mary, held I honour In this world and the Hereafter and of those Nearest to Allah. (1989, Surah Al Maryam. 19:18, 45)

But who is this “Messiah?” The Jesus of the Qur’an did not die on a cross, nor then, did he make a sacrificial atonement for sinners! In Islam, the ground (basis) for salvation is said to be “the mercy of Allah” which sounds good (the word “grace” is sprinkled throughout the English translations), but the *means* of obtaining that mercy is the keeping of the

“five pillars” of the faith: [1] recitation of the *Shahadah*—the confession that “There is no deity but Allah...”; [2] *Salat*—prayers three to five times daily facing Mecca; [3] *Zakat*—almsgiving; [4] *Saum*—fasting, especially during the month of Ramadhan; and, [5] the *Hajj*—a one-time pilgrimage to Mecca (Parshall 1985, 39–46, 230; Jenkins 1991, 1–3). The *JIHAD* (the struggle), an Islamic newsletter published regularly in Nairobi, Kenya warns the faithful:

This should remind us that our claim of being Muslims cannot guarantee us paradise. Our wealth, race, tribe or community are of no use. The promise of paradise and warning of hell goes to all of us. Any Muslims can go to paradise or hell. Though our deeds are not the ultimate qualifications for paradise, but the mercy of Allah (S.W.T.), but we all should strive to compete in doing good deeds. We should not expect the mercy of Allah (S.W.T.) if we do ignore our duty, which is what we have done . . . Our faith (Iman) has become very weak to the extent that our generosity has come to be associated only with the month of Ramadhan . . . We give them what they have always desired to have. When Ramadhan ends, we abandon them. We are ready to pay taxes to support governments yet we are not ready to pay Zaka [alms] for the cause of Islam. We have to be begged to do so. We look aside and ignore the plight of Muslims. Should we then expect Allah’s (S.W.T.) mercy? Should we expect paradise or hell? If we wish to go to paradise we have to change the course of our lives. We have to be Muslim in deeds. That’s when we shall have a reason to hope for the mercy of our Creator. . . (1994, 2).

The Christian knows the truth: *Jesus* is the only Way (Jn. 14:6). We must emphasize: justification by faith alone in the finished work of Christ on the cross is unique to the Christian Gospel. Every other “world religion” is based on man earning his way into whatever reward is promised. The oft-repeated myth that “all religions are the same” is preposterous. The Gospel makes the only offer mankind has ever had for a righteousness that comes as a gift, apart from works, received by faith alone. It is this very uniqueness that is threatened whenever the Christian life is framed in terms of rulekeeping rather than as an ongoing *intimate personal relationship* with God, based on grace, sustained by faith, and resulting in obedience by love.

3. The Importance of Properly Understanding *and* Communicating Justification by Faith in the African Context

a) How to Stop Sending People to Hell Through Your Church

(1) The Problem of a Deficient “Gospel”

That is a shocking thought—“*sending people to hell through your church!*” C. John Miller, in his book, *Powerful Evangelism for the Powerless*, says that this can and does happen in American, and in missionary church plants where justification by faith is not central to the message preached (Miller 1997, 127). He cites as an example the experience of missionary Trevor McIlwain who visited what had been purported to be the mature fruit of a church-planting work on the Island of Palawan in the Philippines. McIlwain questioned a number of the church members and officers about how they had come to faith in Christ—specifically regarding their experience of the conviction of sin at conversion. Miller offers this summary of McIlwain findings:

The first missionaries led a people’s movement in which thousands of islanders made professions of faith and were gathered into churches. The next missionaries came and disciplined the people through Christian education. These missionaries assumed that the people all understood the gospel and trusted in Christ for salvation. McIlwain came and asked the people many questions. What he learned was alarming. The missionaries had neglected a foundational obligation: to learn the true spiritual condition of each person under their care. The church members talked about trusting in Christ, but close listening revealed that they had not broken with the self-trust of the natural human heart.

The people were still trusting in their good works, prayers, repentances, and church membership as their eternal hope, and instruction in discipleship simply frustrated them and left them guilt-ridden (Miller 1997, 127).

(2) The Solution: Teaching The Cross of Christ in its Systemic Context

(a) Firm Gospel Foundations We have found that the same confusion about justification is widespread in Africa. We have seen it while doing evangelism with rural Maasai elders in Kenya, in teaching groups of pastors from a dozen denominations, in

congregational leadership teams, in an international Christian university and in international theological seminaries (masters level) in Nairobi. How does this happen? The human heart certainly has both the capacity *and* propensity to corrupt free justification, but, as McIlwain found, the *missionaries* who evangelize a people-group may have flawed theology or be so eager to “get results” that they fail to lay a firm doctrinal foundation for the emerging church.

In 1995 we began experimenting with the chronological method of evangelism (Biblical-historical). It is not uncommon for evangelists in Africa and elsewhere to preach a context-less Christ—one who appears, Melchizedek-like in the midst of the drama of human history. But Jesus invaded a creation-fall-redemption *system* under the control of a sovereign God. God had created man in paradise; man had sinned and lost paradise; Christ came to redeem that fallen system to restore paradise and perfect fellowship with the Creator. Without understanding God’s system *as a system*, its isolated parts are unintelligible.

The Cross of Christ is the pivotal event in redemptive history. What is the Biblical-theological history that undergirds the Cross and makes it intelligible? We would suggest that the following concepts are needed for an informed decision for Christ to be made:

[1] *God’s creation of man*: Why should people listen to stories about, much less bow down to, “*your god*” when they are quite satisfied with their own deity and their own story of origins? Because God made them for himself, that’s why! If you use a tool such as *The Four Spiritual Laws*, don’t begin “God loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life,” without defining who God is, and why they should know him. Without doing that, neither you as an evangelist, nor your Gospel, have “legs” to stand on. [2] *The Fall and its consequences*: Men must see their fallenness, and that they stand in need of a salvation that comes from *outside* themselves. Use the moral law, God’s Ten Commandments as his “Ten Spiritual Laws,” i.e. showing their *spiritual* implications and demands. This will underscore

that, since God is the one sinned against, he is the only one who can set the terms of reconciliation. [3] *The Biblical theology of "blood covenant":* This begins with God's clothing our first parents in the garden, by using the shed blood of an innocent animal to cover them (by grace). The "trail of blood" (or, "the scarlet thread of redemption" as we call it) continues through the Old Testament narrative in the Jewish sacrificial system, with the blood of innocent animals slain as a picture of what was to come. ("It is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sin" Heb. 10:14.) [4] *The atonement:* Now your hearers have a context for understanding John the Baptist's announcement, "Behold the Lamb of God that takes away the sins of the world!" and Jesus' substitutionary death for sinners on the Cross. [5] *Justification by Faith:* Show them that faith in the historical facts of Jesus' sinless life, substitutionary death, and bodily resurrection, *reconcile* them to God. By faith, we are identified with Christ and receive the merits of his perfect obedience, payment for sin, and the sure hope of our resurrection from the dead. [6] *Sanctification by Faith and the Holy Spirit:* "The Sola-fide is at the heart of justification but no less at the heart of sanctification" (Berkouwer 1952, 33). Faith is *the* means of initially receiving the Gospel for justification apart from law-works, and also *the* means for fueling a life of loving obedience to God for sanctification apart from law-works. Because man's sinful flesh loves the doctrine of self-justification, if this last stage is not included in our teaching, new converts will very likely devise a system of law for their *sanctification*, and, apart from any conscious reliance on the Holy Spirit, depend on their performance under that system of works for their ongoing acceptance with God. The effect of this is that their understanding of justification is undermined. That is what happened in Paul's Galatian churches, and the same is being repeated across Africa today. Paul warned that legalism is a deadly heresy—"another gospel" (Gal. 1:7-9).

If we are to be able to accurately present the essential content of the Gospel so that our hearers can understand, we must learn how to “exegete” their culture. If we watch closely, ask questions and listen carefully, their lives or words will usually surface some burning question that will enable us to “enter the system” of the Gospel at any of these points so that we can move on to present the whole of it. When Paul visited the Areopagus on Mars Hill in Rome, he got into a wrangle with the resident Epicurean and Stoic philosophers by preaching Jesus and the resurrection from the dead—a good place to start considering their love of hearing and debating new ideas (Acts 17:18). Paul’s approach so piqued their curiosity they asked him to speak to the whole assembly. It was *then* that he “earned his theological legs” in the famous address about “The Unknown God.” He gave those philosophers a sound reason as to *why* they should listen to him, and why they should scrap their whole pantheon!

The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by hands. And he is not served by human hands, as if he needed anything, because he himself gives all men life and breath and everything else. From one man he made every nation of men, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he determined the times set for them and the exact places where they should live. . . (17:24–26).

With one quick phrase, Paul earned the right to be heard by showing these men that, not only were they confused about one or two philosophical points, but that their world view was spurious. He attacked their thought-system, its invisible underpinnings and its visible superstructure. He told them that they were accountable to this God who had made them and who was, whether they were conscious of it or not, ordering their lives and their entire world. Paul used an apologetic methodology that underscored this fact: that the Biblical revelation is a systemic entity that embraces all of existence—from the creation of the universe to the promised renewal of all things. He evangelized Jews and Gentiles differently. The core content was the same, but he didn’t talk about Messianic prophecies to the Greeks,

or the “divine logos” to the Jews. His evangelism demonstrates the principle one may “*enter the system*” at any point according to the needs (felt or real) of the hearers, and present the Gospel effectively. The starting point is not important, but no matter where you enter the redemptive narrative (with the creation, judgment, the sacrificial system, the resurrection, the Cross, etc.), you must move from that point to expound the entire system, or your hearers will be unable to make an informed, saving response to the Gospel.

After our first halting (but fruitful) attempts at chronological teaching for evangelism, we discovered Trevor McIlwain’s *Building on Firm Foundations*, an excellent 105 pictorial series of pictures of Biblical events (spanning Eden to the Book of Acts), and accompanied by a nine volume text for teachers. We use and highly recommend this series. There are deficiencies in the work as to content and methodology (such as an overemphasis on the anger of God in the Old Testament sections, and an overabundance of Old Testament material) but the constructive criticisms of Steffen will help the user correct those problems. (Steffen 1993, 154-65).

(b) Loving Spiritual Inquiry McIlwain exhorts us as Christian teachers to carry out careful and loving spiritual inquiry with people to find out the basis for their hope of heaven. Instructing people to live like Christians who are not children of God can send them out into a lost eternity without any sense of the danger they are in. (1991, 21– 22). This type of spiritual inquiry is not just for “them” either. The Apostle Paul had no qualms about writing to the whole lot of professing Christians in Corinth and instructing them to examine themselves to see if they were really in the faith (II Cor. 13:5). Paul said, “Test yourselves. Do you not realize that Christ Jesus is in you—unless, of course, you fail the test?” Surely you and I are not above testing ourselves! Perhaps as some of you have considered these definitions of justification, you have realized that your faith has been resting on something other than Jesus blood and righteousness. Often as we teach *SONSHIP for Africa* to

Christian leaders, some will stand to publicly confess that until the present time they had never really understood the core truth of the Gospel—that they are justified by faith in Christ's atonement. So, it would not be odd that some of our readers might be trusting in their attempts to please God in some way as the basis for their justification. It might be trust in works of compassion, church attendance, Bible study, or the fact that they raised their hand or went forward in response to an evangelistic invitation, or even that they "*asked Jesus into your heart*"—none of which has anything at all to do with sin, atonement, or justification by faith. So, dear reader, be sure that you have put your trust *in Christ*, and if there is any doubt whatsoever, settle the matter now. Perhaps you need to ask him to blot out all of your transgressions for the sake of his Son who bore them on the Cross for you? We can go to the Father with our sins anytime. He is ready to welcome us. How utterly tragic that many people, after what they *think* has been a life of service to Christ, will end up standing with the "Matthew Seven People" on the Day of Judgment crying out, "*Lord! Lord!*" Jesus said there will be "many" of them, but the only words they will hear from his lips will be, "*Depart from me; I never knew you*" (Matt. 7:22, 23). The warm embrace of the Father, the spotless righteousness of the Son, and the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit await us. They are ours for the asking. Ask.

b) Justification: Our Permanent and Fully Portable Covering of Grace

There is another dangerous teaching that has infiltrated the church in Africa—the opposite of presumption—the idea that if a person dies without confessing each and every sin, they will be lost. This is based on a twofold misunderstanding: [1] The assumption that we can actually *see* and therefore repent of all of our sins. We cannot, of course, since we are much worse than we think. The sins we *see* are only our "surface sins"—the visible fruit of a bad root—the sin beneath the sin. [2] That I John 1:9 is a *threat of judgment* rather than a *promise of grace*! "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins,

and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (KJV). We must understand: repentance for *justification* happens only once; repentance for *sanctification* should happen daily (*SON-SHIP*, S-10). Justification happens in God's courtroom; sanctification takes place in the human heart. That is what John is teaching. This is easy to confuse because both involve repentance, and in both, the *activity* of repentance looks the same: we recognize our sin, grieve over it, confess specific sins, and trust in the blood of Jesus to cleanse them. But the *effect* of these two repentances differs greatly. In the first instance, forgiveness unto *salvation* is the effect. In the second, the result is our forgiveness unto *cleansing* and the restoration of our broken fellowship with God.

The popular idea that we can be saved and lost in a day, perhaps many times in a day, may be good Islam, but it is bad Christianity. It is a gross perversion of the doctrine of free justification and a source of grief to the Father who loves us, the Christ who died for our sins (past, present, *and* future), and the Holy Spirit whose role it is to "bear witness with our spirit that we are the children of God" (Rom. 8:16). This wretched doctrine robs Christians of their peace, their assurance, and the joy of their salvation. Let us be clear: our justification is by faith, not by works, and it is once-for-all, not temporary. The moment God acquits us, we are placed under the permanent protection of his grace and are "*shielded by God's power until the salvation ready to be revealed in the last time*" (1 Pet. 1:5). The Father adopts us into his family—permanently—and sends the Holy Spirit into our hearts to seal us as belonging to Christ (Gal. 4:5,6; Eph. 4:30). Paul, writing to the Colossians, reminds them of how God raised them from spiritual death to life. He follows that with a full-orbed exposition emphasizing God's sovereign activity in our salvation:

When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your sinful nature, God made you alive with Christ [regeneration]. He forgave us all our sins, having canceled the written code, with its regulations, that was against us and that stood opposed to us [justification]; he took it away, nailing it to the cross [redemption]. And having disarmed

the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross [deliverance from evil] (Col. 2:13–15, comment mine).

This is the kind of powerful text we need to expound clearly to our own hearts, and to those who are confused about the nature of justification, and struggling with assurance. The “eyes of their hearts” need to be filled with a vision of the incomparable Christ—the Mighty Warrior who has triumphed not only over their sins, but over the myriad demonic spirits that they fear can plague their lives with sickness, pestilence and death.¹

And, they need to see a tender Christ, the one who called himself the Good Shepherd of the sheep. Jesus, in referring to himself this way was saying in essence, “I am he of whom the prophet Isaiah spoke!”

O Zion, that bringest good tidings, get thee up into the high mountain; O Jerusalem, that bringest good tidings, lift up thy voice with strength; lift *it* up, be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God! Behold, the Lord GOD will come with strong *hand*, and his arm shall rule for him: behold, his reward *is* with him, and his work before him. He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry *them* in his bosom, *and* shall gently lead those that are with young (Isa. 40:9–11, KJV).

Think of it! The one who took up little children in his arms and blessed them, carries *us* in his arms, and leads *us*. This is our Good Shepherd! What a joy to be in his care, the one who laid down his life for his sheep. Would the one who bought us with his own blood let us wander away from him and be lost? Never! (Jn. 10:28, 29)

Finally, both the *perseverance* and the *preservation* of God’s adopted ones needs to be understood. We must not confuse them. Preservation is God’s part, that is he preserves us,

¹ If left unchallenged, the African traditional theology of the “undead”—the idea that the spirits of recently departed relatives must be regularly appeased by sacrifice—will undermine confidence in Christ. Spiritism is pandemic and must be directly rebutted with the Christology of Colossians 2, the careful teaching of Biblical thanatology and eschatology, and active spiritual warfare through believing, confrontational prayer. “Jesus name was held in high honor” when Paul’s ministry challenged traditional pagan religious practice (e.g. Acts 19:17ff).

holds us in union with Christ. As a consequence of that, our perseverance, our holding onto Christ is assured. We are like children who are being rescued from drowning in a raging surf. The waves tower threateningly over our heads, the world, the flesh and the devil crash around us. Oh, yes! Our spindly arms of faith are wrapped firmly around Christ, but it is the unbreakable grip of his powerful arms that makes the rescue certain. Our trust is not in our grip, but his. The truth is, that if our “getting saved” or our “staying saved” was up to us, none of us would ever meet God except in one capacity—as our Judge.

*Upon a life I did not live, upon a death I did not die; Another's life,
another's death, I rest my whole eternity. – Anonymous*

4. Justification in Summary

Justification:

a) *is a legal term* which concerns God in his role as Righteous Judge. Thus Jesus is said to be our “advocate” (lawyer) who “speaks in our defense” to the Father. (1 Jn. 2:1)

b) *is an acquittal*, a pronouncement of “not guilty” on us who are truly guilty sinners, and is made solely on the basis that Christ paid the full penalty for all our sins on the cross. For what sins? We say it again: for our past, present, and future sins. He took them all on himself and bore the full measure of God’s wrath for the lot.

Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed. We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all (Isa. 53:4-6).

c) *is a once-and-for-all judicial action* that never needs to be repeated. “He did not enter by means of the blood of goats and calves; but he entered the Most Holy Place once for all by his own blood, having obtained eternal redemption” (Heb. 9:12a).

d) is ours *by faith* as we trust in the work of Jesus Christ as our legal substitute who, in our stead, bore all our sins in his body on the cross.

However, to the man who does not work but trusts God who justifies the wicked, his faith is credited as righteousness (Rom. 4:5).

Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ (Rom. 5:1).

e) removes the debt of unrighteousness *from* our account, but deposits the righteousness of Christ *to* our account. The effect of this is that God looks upon us as truly righteous. "God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, that in him, we might become the righteousness of God" (II Cor. 5:21).

f) not only makes us righteous, but makes us God's *sons by adoption*, secures the gift of the indwelling Holy Spirit, and insures that we are full heirs of all the rights and privileges of the children of God.

But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law, to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons. Because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, 'Abba, Father.' So you are no longer a slave, but a son; and since you are a son, God has made you also an heir (Gal. 4:4-7).

Martin Luther, "the first Protestant" (1483–1546), put it this way:

Just as the earth does not produce the rain, nor is it able to acquire it by its own strength, worship, and power, but rather receives it only as a gift from heaven above, so this heavenly righteousness is *given* to us by God *without* our work or merit. To the *same extent* that the dry earth is able by itself to obtain the rain, we men are able to accomplish that divine, heavenly, and eternal righteousness by our own strength and works. So, we can obtain it *only* through the free imputation and indescribable gift of God (Luther 1963, 25:6, emphasis mine).

g) was Christ's defeat of all his and our enemies. We need not fear the devil, his demonic hosts, or imaginary spirits of departed ancestors, the power of a witch doctor, shaman,

marabu (Jula), *mganga* (Swahili) witch, diviner, or their “magic charms” or spells. We serve a Mighty Christ who “*disarmed the powers and authorities,*” and “*made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross*” (Col. 2:13–15).

h) Lastly, *justification is the ground* (the legal basis) of our sanctification.

These are the theological particulars concerning justification. The powerful *affective* response this doctrine should generate in our souls will be considered later.

B. Sanctification Defined and Explained

1. Sanctification Defined

a) The Biblical Terms for Sanctification

The verb “sanctify” in the Old Testament is *qadash* (קָדַשׁ), “to set apart as holy.” (TWOT, “They will be called the Holy People, the Redeemed of the LORD (Isa. 62:12a).” The adjective is *qodesh* (קֹדֶשׁ), set apart, holy. In the New Testament, the verb for sanctify is *hagiazō* (ἀγιάζω), to make holy, and the adjective is *hagios* (ἅγιος), holy. (DNTT, 225) As we look at sanctification in the Scriptures and observe the process in our experience, we see at least three senses in which the term can be used.

b) Theological Definitions of Sanctification

Following are three definitions for sanctification:

(1) *Catechism for Young Children* (Presbyterian)

Q. 50 What is sanctification?

A. It is God’s making sinners holy in heart and conduct. (n.d. 10)

(2) *Keach's Catechism* (Baptist, from the *Philadelphia Confession of Faith*, 1742)

Q. 39 What is sanctification?

A. Sanctification is a work of God’s free grace whereby we are renewed in the whole man after the image of God, and are enabled more and more to die unto sin, and live unto righteousness. (2 Thess. 2:13; Eph. 4:23, 24; Rom. 6:11) (n.d., 24)

(3) Lois Berkhof, *Summary of Christian Doctrine* (Dutch Reformed)

"Sanctification may be defined as that gracious and continuous operation of the Holy Spirit by which He purifies the sinner, renews his whole nature in the image of God, and enables him to perform good works..." (1938, 143).

c) The Motive for Sanctification

From God's point of view, the motive for our sanctification is the glory of his name among the nations (Ezekiel 36:22). From our point of view, the motive for our sanctification is that we bring him that glory by our obedience to him *in love*. Our obedience is sustained by faith, and our faith is blessed by the Holy Spirit with the fruit of love. We serve him because we love him, and "we love him because he first loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. . ." (1 Jn. 4:19).

(1) Motives Suggested Motives other than love have been suggested: fear, duty, and gratitude being among them. Should we "fear" God? Yes, but how? As a Righteous Judge, or as the loving Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our Father through Christ? The Apostle John put it: "*There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love*" (1 Jn. 4:18). This underscores the importance of a solid understanding of justification. Christ took our punishment, and with it, our fear of punishment. The person who is motivated to seek sanctification or "do works for God" out of a fear of his judgment is not made perfect in love. That is to say, they have the heart of a slave, not of a son. Duty was mentioned. In our view, duty is a thinly veiled version of fear. The first chapter of Malachi will show what happens to service that is motivated by duty instead of flowing from love. It becomes corrupted. To "get by," and to do "what is expected" becomes the focus, and our hearts tell us, "What a burden it is!" (Mal. 1:13) Dutiful hearts repulse God just as surely as loving hearts delight him. "*Oh that someone would shut the temple doors!*" he thunders (1:10). Fear, duty and obligation are slave words, not son words. If pleasing God is our goal, they will have no place in our hearts, *and* we will strike them from the vocabulary we use to motivate others.

What about gratitude, then? It is a popular choice. Gratitude is certainly a cut above fear and duty, but in some cultures, it carries the idea of paying back: "you scratched my back; now I'll scratch yours." One could argue that payback is not necessarily implied, but because all grace is free grace, we believe "gratitude" is an inferior choice *unless* it is understood in the context of love. Here in Africa, where a mind set of *mutual obligation* permeates human relationships, teaching gratitude as the motive for Christian service, carries *theological* overtones regarding our relationship with God that wise teachers will make every effort to avoid as they proffer a salvation which is all of grace. Whether we speak of the Old Covenant or the New, God has always asked for our love (Deut. 6:5 and Matt. 22:37).

(2) The Higher Motive Love, we believe, is the most correct semantic and theologically sound choice, for this reason: any other motivation may indicate that we lack both a sound intellectual grasp of, and an adequate emotional response to, the radical nature of God's passionate love for us in the Gospel. Pick duty, fear, or gratitude if you must, but they are a poor substitute for the powerful give-and-take *affection* of the "Abba-Father!" cry of sonship. The twin-calling of someone's name is the very essence of verbal intimacy in Jewish culture. (cf. "Samuel, Samuel," and "Saul, Saul" in I Sam. 3:4,6 and Acts 9:4) Jesus says we should keep his commandments because it demonstrates our love for him. He says: "If you *love* me, keep my commandments," not, "Keep my commandments if you know what's good for you, or, if you feel obligated to me in some way" (Jn. 14:15). Love is the motive of *God's* choice.³

³ Jesus' words, "When you have done everything you were told to do, you should say, 'We are only unworthy servants; we have only done our duty.' " (Lk. 17:9) is the humble response of a faithful servant, not Christ's prescription for our motivation. cf. "Not from eyeservice as menpleasers, but doing God's will from the heart." (Eph. 6:6)

The way we teach love as a motive is important too. We may know not to tell a child, "Now, Winnie, don't you want to go to church today to show God how *grateful* you are to him?" The idea of payback oozes from that "suggestion." But does merely substituting love for gratitude solve the problem? "Now Winnie, don't you want to go to church to show God how much you *love* him?" Hardly. It is evil language that twists love into duty, and implies volumes about what motivates us, as well. What does motivate us? What do we want for our children? Is the point of it all to *attend church*, or *worship God face-to-face*? If the worship of God is our goal for them, they must first know and love him. Knowing as we do that pure service issues from love, that fact should govern our motivational methodology. If we lead our parishioners, pupils or our own children, into the depths of a loving relationship with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, they will be changed. When they understand that their relationship with God is grace, not performance based—that there is *nothing* they could do to make God love them any more tomorrow than he does today—their hearts will be captured by this Great Lover of their souls. Then, they will love him in return, and serve him *because* they love him. Service motivated by anything less, is ill-motivated busyness. We will speak to the subject of our personal motivation in a later chapter.

One may argue that Paul says, "*Since, then, we know what it is to fear the Lord, we persuade men?*" (II Cor. 5:11). Does this overthrow all we have said? Is Paul's motive for service the fear of God, as Hodge implies (1974, 505)? No, the fear he speaks of here is not *his* fear, but the terror of the wrath of God that will strike the hearts of unbelievers on the Day of Judgment (Ridderbos 1975, 11). Paul goes on to explain what motivated him: his love for Christ, and for the Corinthians who were loved by the Christ who loved sinners (including himself) unto death. Paul says:

If we are out of our mind, it is for the sake of God; if we are in our right mind, it is for you. For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again (II Cor. 5:14–15).

The Puritan William Gurnall notes that “meditating” on “the peerless, matchless love of God in Christ” *ignites our love for God*, and by that love, “the Christian bestirs himself with might and main” (Gurnall 1964, 2:34). But, next to Paul, A. W. Pink said it best: “*Only love answers to love*” (Pink 1976, 91).

d) Sanctification and Time: The Three Senses

(1) Sanctification as State (a condition)

This is the most frequent use of the word in the Old Testament. People and objects were “sanctified ” or “set apart” for some holy service or special use for God. In this limited sense, this type of sanctification is complete since the character of the person or thing does not necessarily change—only its function or use. Israel was “set apart” from the nations (Lev. 20:24) but continued to sin gravely and persistently. Ordained priests such as Eli’s evil sons, Hophni and Phinehas, were not made morally holy because of their high office. The same is true of us. Because God has chosen, called, regenerated, and covered us in the spotless righteousness of Christ, we *are* sanctified. That is, God looks on us as righteous even though every part of our lives are corrupted with sin. (When we are inclined to doubt this, and which of us does not suffer from an occasional attack of self-righteousness, a rapid review of Matthew 22:37It will be helpful in restoring us to sanity.) So, in a positional sense, if not in an actual sense, in Christ we *are* sanctified. “But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God” (1 Cor. 6:11).

(2) Sanctification as Process (a progressive work)

As the believer learns a deeper trust in Christ as his Savior and lovingly bows more fully to his lordship, he *is being* sanctified. The *Westminster Shorter Catechism* reflects the fact that growth in holiness is a process when it asks:

Q. 35 What is sanctification?

Answer: Sanctification is the work of God's free grace, whereby we are renewed in the whole man after the image of God, and are enabled more and more to die unto sin, and live unto righteousness (1559, 408).

In Ephesians 4:11-15, Paul describes the process of Christian growth. Maturity, he says, is "growing up in all things into. . . Christ (vs. 15)," that is, when we yielded our wills to Christ, we grow in Christlikeness. This "growing up" has nothing to do with climbing up some "ladder of holiness" so that we get higher than other Christians. Nor does it mean that we earn a special status that carries with it some lofty title such as "saint." If there is any real climbing to be done for sanctification, the direction will always be *down*, in the direction of greater dependence on the imputed righteousness of Christ, not up. The reason is that the grace of God runs in only one direction—downhill to the needy. That is why J. I. Packer insists that "*all growth in grace is growth downwards...*" (1984, 106).

(3) Sanctification as Event (as a succession of points in time)

This is different from sanctification seen as a state, or a condition. Think now of a condition as being a continual succession of points in time. One cannot be holy for an hour without being holy for a full sixty minutes, and as each new minute arrives, there will be opportunities for sin. Thus we can see that sanctification is a series of moments made up of choices to believe or not believe, obey or not obey, love or not love. When we love someone with the love of Christ, we could call that a "*sanctification event*." But the love we showed our hungry neighbor at breakfast today will not ensure a full stomach at midnight. We will need to feed him again. (We might stop short of the second or third feeding and congratulate ourselves on our holiness, but it is doubtful that he will.) Or, in the case of

temptation to some sin, lying for instance. If we are tempted to lie, and *resist* that temptation, and tell the truth, *that* is a sanctification event. It is a moment in which, by faith, we lay hold of Christ and his righteousness, and are thus empowered to do the will of God—tell the truth. If we should succumb to the temptation and lie, we could call that a “sin event,” and our subsequent repentance yet another sanctification event.

In his *True Spirituality*, Francis Schaeffer notes that when one examines the way we subjectively experience spiritual growth, the oft-criticized existentialists have made a good point. He uses the term “active passivity” to describe the “sanctification as event” idea. He says:

When I talk about living the Christian life moment by moment, I can only live it in practice one moment at a time, just as my justification took place in one moment. There is no other way to do it. . . . so we must believe God’s promises at this one moment in which we are. Consequently, in believing God’s promises, we apply them—the present meaning of the work of Christ for the Christian—for and in this one moment. If you only can see that, everything changes. As we believe God for this moment, the Holy Spirit is not quenched. And through his agency, the risen and glorified Christ, as the bridegroom of the bride, the vine, brings forth his fruit through us, at this moment. This is the practice of active passivity. And it is the only way anybody can live: there is no other way to live but moment by moment (1971, 86).

Thus, Paul called the Christian life a “walk” (*cf.* Col. 2:6; II Cor. 5:7, Gal. 5:16, etc.) and what is a walk but a series of simple steps repeated over and over again—steps of faith. We will have more to say about this in Part II, *SONSHIP for Africa*.

2. The Holy Spirit Applies Redemption and Serves as the Agent of Sanctification

To God’s elect, strangers in the world. . . who have been chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, *through the sanctifying work of the Spirit*, for obedience to Jesus Christ and sprinkling by his blood: Grace and peace be yours in abundance (I Pet. 1:1, 2, emphasis mine).

The breadth of Holy Spirit's responsibility in God's dealings with us is astonishing, but of late, there has been such an emphasis on his extraordinary gifts that the most significant elements of his work are often overlooked. Dividing his ministry into its saving, sanctifying, and equipping functions is helpful. In salvation, the Spirit works on dead people; in sanctification and equipping, on living ones. That is, before the Spirit can sanctify us, or equip us for service, he must first raise us from the dead. When we initially hear the Gospel, we can't *really* hear it, much less act on it, because we have no spiritual ears—only physical ones. Dead people are notoriously hard of hearing. But, like the “bleached bones” in Ezekiel's vision, the Spirit of God “blows” on us and we live! (cf. Ezek. 37) Paul says that God “makes us alive together with Christ” (συνεζωοποίησεν τῷ Χριστῷ, Eph. 2:5). The proper theological term is *regeneration*. After raising us to life, we can hear, really hear, the Gospel. Then, the Spirit works faith in Christ in us, and we exercise that unto justification (Eph. 2:8–9). The fact that we are not conscious of the Spirit's work has led some (Pelagius and his progeny) to assume that spiritual birth and faith are man's doing, but the last time we checked, dead people were not raising themselves from the dead, birthing themselves, or giving themselves faith (Jn. 3:5–8). Still, this faith *is ours*. We truly exercise it, and in the exercise of it are “accounted as righteous,” that is, God the judge delivers the verdict of “not guilty” on the basis of what Christ has done for us (Rom. 4:18–25). The Holy Spirit then seals us as belonging to Christ under the agency of the New Covenant of grace: “having believed, we were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit. . .” (Eph. 1:13).

Justification is the Father's work; sanctification is the Spirit's. At the Father's command, the Spirit birthed us, and now he supervises our growth in godliness. But, he does this very much in the background so as not to call too much attention to himself. Sometimes he is even called “the Spirit of Christ” to remind us that his role is *Christocentric*, that is, he brings us to Christ, seals us in Christ, nourishes us in Christ, helps us abide in Christ,

changes us into the image of Christ, gives us gifts with which to serve Christ, and keeps us in Christ until we see Christ. We need to beware of subordinating the person of the Spirit, but at the same time acknowledge that the Holy Spirit's highest joy is to exalt Christ—not to call attention to himself. In some segments of the church today (in Africa and elsewhere), there is such an emphasis on the person and work of the Spirit that the ongoing intercessory work of Christ for us is neglected. After centuries when the Spirit was virtually disregarded, we must not let the pendulum swing too far the other way. Jesus made it clear that the Spirit never operates as an independent contractor. Not only can his work not be divorced from the Father and the Son, his will is *to do* the will of the Father and the Son.

But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come. He shall glorify Me; for He shall take of Mine, and shall disclose *it* to you. All things that the Father has are Mine; therefore I said, that He takes of Mine, and will disclose *it* to you (Jn. 16:13–15).

We will speak more fully of the role of the Spirit in sanctification in a later chapter, so a brief word will suffice here. A. W. Pink's *Spiritual Union and Communion* is a masterful weaving together of the works of Puritan writers on the nature of our union with Christ.³ Here he quotes from Jos. Bellamy (1719–1790), who said:

The Gospel represents *God the Holy Spirit* as being sent of the Father as prime Agent, and by the Son as Mediator, in the character of an enlightener and sanctifier, in order to bring sinners effectually to see and be made sensible of their sin, guilt, and ruin; to believe the Gospel, to trust in Christ, and to return home to God through Him. It is His office to dwell in believers; to teach and lead them; to sanctify, strengthen, comfort, and keep them through faith unto salvation.

The Father is God by nature, and God by office. The Son is God by nature, and Mediator by office. The Spirit is God by nature, and Sanctifier by office. . . . The Holy Spirit acts as having been sent by them Both: John 14:16 (Pink 1971, 21).

³ The divines that Pink quotes in *Spiritual Union and Communion* are better food than Pink's attempts to link them together, since he tends to be unclear when trying to explain what the instrumental means of sanctification might be. He variously identifies it as faith, obedience, and then love on pages 90, 91, and 96.

C. Justification and Sanctification Related

1. How they are related:

a) Justification is the ground of sanctification.

G. C. Berkouwer says, "It is self-evident that any view of regeneration, faith, and sanctification, must be weighed and tested by the criterion of whether it does justice to the forgiveness of sin as the only ground and source of sanctification" (1952, 96).

b) Sanctification is a necessary, not optional, result of justification.

B. B. Warfield, a giant among American Reformed theologians in any century, writes:

In clear accord with the teaching of Scripture, Protestant theology insists that justification underlies sanctification, and not *vice versa*. But it has never imagined that the sinner could get along with justification alone. It has rather ever insisted that sanctification is so involved in justification that the justification cannot be real unless it be followed by sanctification (1952, 374).

Here Warfield affirms both Paul and James, Biblical writers who are often pitted against one another. Paul asserts that "we are justified by faith apart from the works of the law (Gal. 2:16), and James that "we are justified by works not by faith alone." Their apparent contradiction is a surface matter, for at the heart they agree. As the saying goes, "we are saved by faith, not by works, but a faith that saves is a faith that works."

2. How they differ.

To complete Berkhof's definition of sanctification:

It differs from justification in that it takes place in the inner life of man, is not a legal but a recreative act, is usually a lengthy process, and never reaches perfection in this life" (1938, 143).

Justification, then, is an objective, judicial act that takes place in God's courtroom; sanctification is an inward process of renewal that takes place in our hearts. Trevor McIlwain, as we have noted, has seen the church ravaged by a failure to differentiate theological truth and

one's subjective experience of it. Here he makes a clear division between the content of the Gospel, justification by faith and sanctification:

Many confuse the Gospel, God's work FOR us in Christ, with God's work IN us by the Holy Spirit. The Gospel is entirely objective. The Gospel is completely outside of ourselves. The Gospel is not about the change which needs to be made in us, and does not take place within us. It was completed in Christ, quite apart from us, almost two thousand years ago. The Gospel is not dependent on man in any way. The Gospel is distorted when people's eyes are turned to what is to be accomplished in them. We were not and cannot be involved in any part of Christ's historical, finished, redemptive work. The sinner must be taught to look completely away from himself and trust only in Christ and His work of salvation (1991, 23).

D. Justification and Sanctification: Their Results

1. The Affective (emotional) Results of Justification

We have listed the legal and official results of justification (see p. 15). Aside from our new legal standing as sons, how does justification affect the way God *feels* about us, and the way we *feel* about God? Does it matter? Yes, the heart is the fountainhead of Biblical obedience. It may be difficult to divide the judicial and affective results of justification, but it is a helpful exercise to wean us from thinking of our salvation in purely cognitive terms.

Here is a principle: the chief means the Holy Spirit uses to keep the love of God burning in our hearts is the Gospel, and in particular, our "preaching the Gospel to ourselves!" Sanctification flows from our faith-response to God's love for us in the Gospel. Put another way: *our sanctification is organically related to our conscious daily apprehension of our justification*. Consider God's love for us and our love for him.

a) God Loves Us Passionately

"How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!" (1 Jn. 3:1) "This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins" (1 Jn. 4:10).

The way God bares his heart to us in the Scriptures borders on the embarrassing (*cf.* Hosea 2:14ff.). God is a passionate being and he passionately loves his people. He has sought to communicate this as loudly as he can, but we haven't heard very well. We tend to recall the Scriptures about his anger, jealousy, and impatience, and forget that he is slow to anger, plenteous in mercy, tender-hearted, and full of compassion. We forget that Jesus wept, that he feels our pain, sees our tears, "saves them in a bottle" (Ps. 56:8) and one day will wipe away all tears from our eyes. We forget that God delights over us as a father over his children. We forget that when Philip said, "Show us the Father and that will be sufficient," that Jesus said, "Have I been with you for so long, Philip, and you haven't understood; when you have seen me, *you have seen the Father!*"

We New Covenant believers need to stop living like Old Testament Israelites who tremble in fear at the quaking of Sinai. It is not heretical to think of Jesus as a prophet and a roommate. His earthly ministry was a picture of our heavenly dwelling *in person* with God! Think about how he *felt* about his disciples. He walked, talked, ate and bunked with them for three years. He never took a holiday and wanted none. He had come for them. He loved them. Yes, they were exasperating at times (as we surely are), but he was gentle with them. He chided them for their "little faith" because he was *disappointed in* them, not *angry at* them. He had come to make them righteous, to take every one of their sins to the Cross, and to bear in himself every particle of the Father's wrath against every one of those sins. Because he knew he was about to die for them, he could not be angry at them. In his mind, the Father's wrath against them was as good as gone. He talked about dying for them all the time because he thought about it all the time. Dying for them and us was what he came to do. He loves you and me as he did them. Personally. By name.

Through our justification by faith in Jesus, the Father is not angry at us anymore. He *can't* be angry. When he looks at you now, he doesn't have a frown on his face; he has the smile of a Father gazing into the face of his child. When Jesus the Messiah, our Elder Brother, our

Great High Priest had perfectly fulfilled God's law—all of it, ceremonial and moral—when he had laid down his perfect life for our imperfect ones, he shouted out from the cross, “*Tetelestai!*”—“It is finished!” [Τετέλεσται - Jn. 19:30] This cry signaled that the certificate of debt written against us had been canceled—paid in full!

Our tendency to compartmentalize the redemptive work of Christ has led to an undervaluation of the *ascension* of Jesus, and to our detriment. We must learn to think of the Cross, the resurrection and the ascension, as an historical continuum. The ascension was the means by which Christ was permanently enthroned at the right hand of the Father as our perpetual intercessor. What is he praying for on our behalf? A new Mercedes? To “intercede” means to “come between,” and his primary role as our Great High Priest is to present himself and his perfect righteousness *to* the Father as if it was our own righteousness (Heb. 7:25; Rom. 8:34). In other words, Christ is “clothing us” in his perfect righteousness and making us so beautiful to the Father that when he looks at us, we look like his Son to him! “*He made him who knew no sin to be sin for us that we might become the righteousness of God in him*” (II Cor. 5:21). That is the Gospel.

The *real* truth about us is that we are ugly and full of sin. We are woefully imperfect, inadequate and incompetent sons and daughters. We are “still under construction” and our best works for him are horribly stained by mixed motivation and flawed performance. Paul says that even our best praying is so imperfect that we need the Holy Spirit to perfect it: “we don’t know how to pray as we ought. . .” (Rom. 8:26). But God is in the business of grace and mercy. Grace is for the imperfect, and as for mercy, only the guilty need apply. God has saved us completely, and is in the process of sanctifying us wholly by renewing our hearts and cleansing our works.

Imagine a father peering out the window at his six year-old son struggling to “build a house” with scrap lumber. There is not a right angle to be seen; every joint is faulty, and every nail is bent over. But, with a smile of joy, the father delights in the attempt. Brennan Manning pictures Jesus saying to an apologetic Christian upon his arrival in heaven: “*Actually, John, you didn’t mess up half as badly as I thought you would*” (Manning 1993). We will never have a perfect work, but in spite of all our faults, our Father finds us *very easy* to love. If we don’t believe that with all our hearts, we are going to stay on the brutal treadmill of performance, struggling and striving to produce some pathetic little work to impress our Father—trying to earn his smile. We must understand: Jesus *is* the warm sunshine of God’s smile on us. Dare to believe it, bask in the warmth of it, and while you’re at it, smile back.

b) We Love God Passionately

“*We love him because he first loved us. . .*” (1 Jn. 4:19, KJV). If we have a difficult time believing that God really loves us, and most of us do, what can we do? We can’t *make* ourselves love someone—even God. We can, however, repent of our lovelessness, and, enter into his love for us. As we do that, our love will flow back to him, and he will have what he wants—our love. To love God more, we “soak ourselves” in the Gospel more. In 1899, Emperor Menelik II of Ethiopia founded the city of Addis Ababa, “New Flower.” Menelik chose the site for his capital because of its natural mineral springs (hot springs), and even now you can ease yourself down into the waters of the Filwoah Baths and have yourself a long, warm, relaxing soak. (We were invited to do this when in Addis, but had a sudden attack of modesty and declined.) What does this have to do with the Gospel? Think of the love of God for you as being a hot mineral spring, and have yourself a nice soak. Enter into the experience of Samuel Trevor Francis (1834–1925) who wrote:

O the deep, deep love of Jesus! Vast, unmeasured, boundless, free;
Flowing like a mighty ocean, in its fullness over me.
Underneath me, all around me, is the current of thy love;
Leading onward, leading homeward, to thy glorious rest above.

Oh the deep, deep love of Jesus! Love of every love the best;
 'Tis an ocean vast of blessing. 'tis a haven sweet of rest.
 O the deep, deep love of Jesus! 'Tis a heav'n of heav'ns to me;
 And it lifts me up to glory, for it lifts me up to thee.
 (Trinity 1990, 535, vs. 1, 3)

We mentioned “preaching the Gospel to ourselves.” We must learn to preach it to ourselves—and *believe* it for ourselves. On the basis of God’s promise, say to your soul: “*I am loved; I am accepted; I am righteous and I am delighted in by my Abba-Father!*” Delighted in? Isn’t that overstating things? God says: “As for the saints who are in the land, they are the glorious ones *in whom is all my delight*” (Ps. 16:3), and “The LORD *delights* in those who fear him, who put their hope in his unfailing love” (Ps. 147:11). When David walked in the knowledge of God’s delight in him, he was powerful, and when he forgot it—or took it for granted—he was powerless. Our experience will be the same.

Most of us labor under a (justified) load of guilt which undermines God's constant assurances that he *really* loves us. We have devised various ways of dealing with this. Some of us see so much of our sin that we mope around, long-faced, fairly dripping with guilt. We are sure that God could not possibly love us. Others of us find the love of God too easy to believe. We don't see enough of our sin. We "whistle in the dark," boast in the great things we have done, are doing, or plan to do for God, and pretend those make us lovable. Both coping mechanisms are an insult to the love of Christ because they are rooted in unbelief and self-confidence—the persistent notion that God's relationship with us is somehow based on what we do. The hardest thing for man to believe is that God loves us for something in Himself instead of in ourselves—that he loves us for Jesus' sake in spite of ourselves. The Gospel tells us to be confident in God's love based on our free justification, not our performance. These ideas of love and grace were foolishness to the Greeks (they lacked philosophical sophistication), and weakness to the Jews (who put their confidence in law). But to us who

are being saved, it is the power of God (1 Cor. 1:18ff). God *cannot* be angry at us. All our sins—the things that could make him angry at us—were laid on Christ.

O the bliss of this glorious thought; my sin, not in part, but the whole,
is nailed to the cross, and I'll bear it no more; Praise the Lord!
Praise the Lord! Oh, my soul!" (*Trinity* 1990, H. Spafford, dated 1873).

If you are in Christ, it *is* well with your soul, so, by faith, enter into that “wellness,” that wholeness, that fullness of the relationship that the Father feels in his heart for you. God intends for us to respond to his emotion *emotionally*. If we fail to experience this *affective* dimension of our justification, it will be impossible for us to grow. Oh, we may grow in knowledge and ministerial expertise. We may be known as “theological giants” but be spiritual dwarfs, dry springs without God’s “rivers of living water” to refresh us and spill over into the lives of others. The Apostle John writes, “*And so we know and rely on the love that God has for us*” (1 Jn. 4:16). Do we? Knowing is cognitive—believing in; relying is active—leaning on. Our “leaning” on God tends to be tenuous. We hold back, leaning as a man leans against a tottering fence rather than a mighty fortress. We trust in our leaning—not in Christ. We have designed *SONSHIP for Africa* as a thief to steal away the self-confidence and self-righteousness of Christians. Until we are stripped of those things (and the process needs to be repeated often), we will never return to and live in that place of utter helplessness and dependence on Christ—the place where we began our Christian life. Jesus called it, our “first love” for him (Rev. 2:5). You see, *he remembers*.

May the Holy Spirit do his gracious work of divesting us of the filthy garments of praise we have woven for ourselves, the false righteousness we “wear” based on our labors for him. May he send us packing to the Mercy Seat with a new appreciation for *how great is our sin*, and *how much greater is the grace of God*. In this section we have been “preaching the Gospel to ourselves” because believing the Gospel changes us, and as we are changed, God will begin to use us as agents of change in the lives of others. As we *keep believing* the Gospel, those

“sanctification events” we spoke of will become more and more frequent. Drudgery will be put to flight, and the Spirit will enable us to live and serve God out of love and a desire for his glory—instead of laboring away to quieten a noisy conscience, escape God’s discipline or impress others.

2. The Results of Sanctification

a) Real Growth in Holiness Now

The Philadelphia Confession of Faith, Chapter XIII “Of Sanctification”

They who are united to Christ, effectually called, and regenerated, having a new heart and a new spirit created in them, through the virtue of Christ’s death and resurrection; are also further sanctified, really and personally, through the same virtue, by his word and Spirit dwelling in them; the dominion of the whole body of sin is destroyed, and the several lusts thereof, are more and more weakened and mortified; and they more and more quickened and strengthened in all saving graces [e.g. faith], to the practice of all true holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord (n.d., 38, 9).

b) Sanctification is Incomplete Now – Perfection Comes in Heaven

Here we quote a modern English version of the *Westminster Confession of Faith*:

This sanctification works in the whole person, but not completely or perfectly in this life. The old sinful nature retains some of its control in the body, mind, and spirit. And so a continual and irreconcilable war goes on in every believer. The old nature tries to get its way in opposition to the Spirit, and the Spirit fights to assert its authority over the flesh.

Although the old nature temporarily wins battles in this warfare, the continual strengthening of the sanctifying Spirit of Christ enables the regenerate nature in each believer to overcome. And so the saints grow in grace, perfecting holiness in the fear of God (WCF 1979, 22).

E. Doctrinal Errors Concerning Sanctification Mentioned

The vocabulary of these old 17th century confessions may be archaic, but the doctrine is sound, and stated with a brevity and clarity not matched since. It is remarkable that with a few sentences they refute the major errors concerning sanctification, both of the past and present, either directly or by implication. When all three parts of this thesis are considered,

the following errors about sanctification are refuted. With the risk of oversimplification, the following is a brief description of eight heterodox (or at best, inadequate) approaches to sanctification:

1. **Legalism** (the attempt at self-sanctification by law-keeping through reliance on human effort rather than conscious reliance on the Spirit; focus on law for the sake of law)

2. **Moralism** (similar to 1; the Christian life is reduced to a set of outward rules; “ought, should, and must” are the operative words; sin is battled through one’s moral willpower)

3. **Antinomianism** (*anti-nomos*, against law; setting aside the moral law of God as a legitimate standard for Christian conduct)

4. **Perfectionism** (minimizes the deeper elements of sin; sees sin only as *conscious willful* disobedience; coupled with the notion that we may fully overcome all sin in this life)

5. **Quietism** (the idea that we do not cooperate in our sanctification by faith; we merely “let go and let God” do the work)

6. **Pietism** (a healthy emphasis on Christian spirituality in the Puritans, but was and is expressed in a radical enthusiasm and heretical mysticism in some segments of the church)

7. **Asceticism** (“sanctification by amputation” as Richard Lovelace terms it; attempts at holiness through self-deprivation and social separation from the world)

8. **Mysticism** (an attempt at direct religious knowledge and/or experience apart from God’s objective revelation in the Scriptures) (NIDCC 1974, 780, 48, 818, 671, 691–92).

F. A Look Back and A Look Ahead: The Already and Not Yet

As long as we are in this world we will be at war, with the spirit of the world, with the devil and his minions, and with the worst enemy of all, our flesh—the foe that makes the world attractive and the lies of the devil sound like truth. Paul told us plainly, that we have only the “first-fruits” of the Spirit, and that in this life we will “groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies” (Rom. 8:23), “longing to be clothed without our heavenly dwelling” (II Cor. 5:2). For now, we are trapped in an eschatological limbo between the *already* and the *not yet*. But we have the Gospel, the

Spirit, and the promise, and that is enough until our faith shall be made sight. Now is “the groaning time”; the best is yet to come.

In Romans 8 Paul stands back and surveys God’s eternal plan of salvation. He sees that sovereign grace conceived it, accomplished it, continues it, and will finish it. The question is, do we see that it doesn’t depend upon us, but on him? That is what our faith must lay hold of—for justification and sanctification. Listen as Paul exults in God’s saving purpose for us in the Gospel, and notice the primacy of love in this grand scheme—both God’s and ours:

And we know that in all things God works for the good of *those who love him*, who have been called according to his purpose. For those God foreknew (denotes relationship, not merely “knowing about”) he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified.

What, then, shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. Who is he that condemns? It is Christ Jesus, who died—*more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us.*

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? . . . No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from *the love of God* that is in Christ Jesus our Lord (Rom. 8:28–39, emphasis mine).

If the love of God seems distant to you, spend some time meditating on this: although the King James Version translates Revelation 1:5, part of John’s great doxology to Jesus: “*Unto him that loved [past tense] us and washed us from our sins in his own blood. . .*” the Greek text reads *ἀγαπᾶντι*—“*loves.*” That means that God the Son is conscious of us and is loving us—this very moment in time. Know and rely on it.

CHAPTER 2

THE MEANS OF SANCTIFICATION

Two Views Compared and Contrasted

A. The Case of the Missing Means

1. Is Something Missing?

In chapter 1, we laid the foundation for our study of the means of sanctification. We defined justification, learned that it is by faith in Christ alone, and saw its implications for our present and future lives. We also defined sanctification as growing to be like Jesus Christ, learned that our free justification is the basis on which we can expect that growth to happen, and by what agency we are sanctified—the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit of God.

We can sum up what we have determined thus far with these four simple propositions:

- The ground (basis) of our justification is the righteousness of Christ.
- The means of our justification is faith in Christ.
- The ground (basis) of our sanctification is our justification.
- The agent of our sanctification is the Holy Spirit.

We have made good progress, but there is still something missing. A careful look at our four propositions will show what it is: There is a missing means.

2. The Missing Means

We are still in the dark about how sanctification happens—its *means*, or its immediate instrument. Perhaps it is all up to us? We know what we should do, and having been given a

new heart, do we simply do it? Where does the “Agent,” the Holy Spirit fit in? Clearly he is involved, but how? Perhaps his work is automatic? Does he mysteriously operate on our wills, so that we suddenly find ourselves thinking and acting differently? Or, is there something we should be doing to get the process moving—or to hasten it along? Are there things we might do to hinder it? Could it be that we are supposed to cooperate with the Holy Spirit in some way? If so, how? The Scriptures are full of promises regarding the power of the Holy Spirit, but how can we get that power? What are the “spiritual mechanics,” the real *working means* of sanctification?

Much of the Christian literature available (we could safely say, almost all of it) either leaves us totally in the dark concerning *means*, or offers us incorrect or unworkable ones. In the past four years it has been a privilege to teach in Kenya, Tanzania, Ivory Coast and Ethiopia, and in addition, to teach students from over twenty African and seven European nations in Nairobi’s international theological schools. The numbers of denominations represented by these students is well into the fifties. Our subject has been the Christian life, and specifically sanctification. In each class, as we have begun to consider the discussion of the means of sanctification, we have always asked this question: “*What is the one thing you should do more of to grow in holiness?*” As the answers have come in, we have recorded them on the board. As an interesting exercise, before you read on, why not ask yourself the same question and make a note of the answer: “*What is the one thing I should do more of to grow in holiness?*”

The list given each time has been amazingly uniform, and surprisingly short: “Pray more;” “Study the Bible more;” “Keep the Ten Commandments;” “Have a more consistent Quiet Time,” and, in last place, “Do more evangelism.” That’s it. Only twice have there been dissenting voices, once in 1997 in Ethiopia from a student who had read ahead

in the *SONSHIP* manual, and another in Tanzania in 1998 from a *missionary* who had been disciplined with *Sonship* by a colleague of ours in the United States. Both of them offered the same strange-sounding advice, “*Believe more!*”

Now, at least, we have several suggestions as to what the means of sanctification might be. Interestingly, all but one of them have a commonality—doing an *outward* activity.

3. Is Our Theology of Sanctification Flawed?

One thing is certain. we *have* a problem, and a deep and far-reaching one at that. Looking at the body of Christ (whether in Africa or elsewhere), there is an appalling lack of love, unity, holiness, and personal spiritual integrity. We see this manifested at every level—from the individual Christian, to the family, to the congregations, and even in entire denominations. This is the painful lament we hear from our students from all over the continent. And the problem is *not* that we aren’t trying. At every one of these levels we are expending enormous amounts of spiritual energy trying to stem the tide of spiritual corruption. We are making resolutions, issuing threats, exacting punishments, and multiplying rules in the hope of anticipating every possible occasion of sin. But the result is that things are growing worse—much worse.

It is time we ask ourselves: is it possible that *our theology of sanctification* is flawed—that Christlikeness is the fruit of a different root than the direct attempt to keep commandments? Could it be that the way we try to encourage holiness discourages it—that we have hit on a way to command obedience that virtually guarantees disobedience? Given the seriousness of the church’s moral failure, we are overdue for a critical re-examination of our theology of growth. Since we can’t lay the blame at the Holy Spirit’s door, we had best take a hard look in the mirror. That is our purpose here, and we have good cause to be

encouraged! Our conviction is that when we discerned where our confusion has been and begin to “strive after sanctification” by Gospel means, renewal will come to our hearts, families, churches, and denominations. And beyond that, since sinning Christians have been a major cause of the world’s profound indifference toward Christ, when it sees that this Jesus we preach is powerful enough to humble sinners *in the church*, it will have good cause to believe that he can help them as well.

4. The Sanctification Gap

And what *is* the biblical means of sanctification? Robert Shaw, in his 1845 exposition of the *Westminster Confession of Faith*, set the standard for precision by analyzing the multiple causalities in sanctification. He wrote:

The *impulsive* or moving cause of sanctification is the free grace of God. – Tit. iii. 5.

The *meritorious* cause is the blood and righteousness of Christ. – Tit. ii. 14.

The *efficient* cause is the Holy Spirit. – 1 Pet. i.2; 2 Thess. ii. 13; 1 Cor. vi. 11.

The *instrumental* cause is faith in Christ. – Acts xv. 9, xxvi. 18.

The *external means* are, 1. the Word, read and preached, the sacraments, and prayer. – John xvii. 17; 1 Pet. ii. 2. Providences, especially afflictive dispensations, are also blessed for promoting the sanctification. . . – Rom. viii. 28, v. 3-5 (Shaw 1974, 144).

Shaw is hardly picking theological nits. He pinpoints the problem with so much of our ineffectual theorizing about holiness: we have a “sanctification gap,” that is, we have ignored *faith*, the essential step between what he identifies as the “*efficient cause*” of sanctification (the Holy Spirit), and the “*external means*” of it, the Word, the sacraments and prayer. Our failure to recognize this has ominous consequences, for when it comes down to the daily living of the Christian life, what was a gap in theory becomes a chasm in practice. The English Puritan Walter Marshall very aptly pointed this out. His 1645 work, *Gospel Mystery of Sanctification* he encouraged believers to learn “the powerful and effectual *means* by

which this great and excellent end [sanctification] may be accomplished.” He said we must attend to this first and most necessary work *before* we can expect success in any of our attempts to grow in holiness (Marshall, 1954, 4):

This is an advertisement very needful; because many are apt to skip over the lesson concerning the *means*, that will fill up this whole treatise, as superfluous and useless. When once they know the nature and excellency of the duties of the law, they account nothing wanting but diligent performances; and they rush blindly upon immediate practice, making more haste than good speed. . . . *Yea, many that are accounted powerful preachers spend all their zeal in the earnest pressing the immediate practice of the law, without any discovery of the effectual means of performance— as if the works of righteousness were like those servile employments that need no skill and artifice at all, but industry and activity* (1954, 4, emphasis mine).

And what is this great “means” to which Marshall directs us so that we might not rush blindly into trying to obey God in our own strength? It is none other than faith in Jesus Christ—the same faith that saved us. He decries antinomianism and says that “we cannot rationally doubt that the moral duties of love to God and our neighbor are absolutely necessary...” (1954, 7). And, he affirms that God makes us holy first by making us know that he loves us and our sins are blotted out by Christ (1954, 19):

The Means or Instruments whereby the Spirit of God accomplisheth our Union with Christ, and our Fellowship with him in all holiness, are the Gospel, by which Christ entereth into our hearts to work faith in us; and faith, whereby we actually receive Christ Himself, with all His fullness, into our hearts. And this faith is a grace of the Spirit, whereby we heartily believe the gospel, and also believe on Christ, as He is revealed and freely promised to us therein, for all his salvation (1954, Direction IV, 40).

Marshall has identified two “causes” of sanctification: the “meritorious cause,” the blood and righteousness of Christ, the content of faith, and, the “instrumental cause,” faith itself, the act of believing or trusting. Rather than divide these, we prefer Shaw’s method of combining them so that when we say “faith,” we mean Christian faith, that is, both *faith* and *its content*—trust in the righteousness of Christ which is offered to us in the Gospel.

B. Clarifying the Two Positions on Means

Having briefly stated our thesis regarding the means of sanctification, we will use the Scriptures as a benchmark to compare and contrast the writings of a number of evangelical and Reformed writers, putting our previous question to them: *"What is the one thing they are telling us to do more of, so that we can grow in holiness?"* This will keep us focused on our primary objective—to understand the inner workings of sanctification. As we proceed, it will become painfully obvious that modern Protestantism has—with disastrous results—ejected faith from its rightful place as the "instrumental cause" of sanctification, and has substituted what Shaw calls the "external means" of growth.

When one surveys Christian literature for instructions on how to grow in holiness, two conflicting voices are heard: one tells us to focus on satisfying the requirements of the moral law. The other tells us to focus on our conscious union with Christ by faith:

Sanctification by a focus on the requirements of the law

Holiness comes as the believer focuses on the moral law, and exerts his best effort to keep it. The Holy Spirit applies to him the "means of grace" (classically: the Word, the sacraments and prayer, to which some add "the spiritual disciplines" (meditation, fasting, solitude, etc.). *Primary focus:* The Law. *Primary instruction:* "Obey in order to be holy."

Sanctification by faith

Holiness comes by faith in the Gospel, specifically in the gift-righteousness of Christ which produces obedience (to the higher law of love) in a conscious cooperation with the Holy Spirit. *Primary focus:* The righteousness of Christ. *Primary instruction:* "Believe in order to be holy."

At this juncture, the difference between these may appear inconsequential. Isn't obedience the ultimate aim and apparent end of both? Yes, but as we have said, there is a yawning chasm which separates them. What's more, the side of that chasm we happen to be

standing on is deeply impacting every aspect of our Christian lives—our understanding of the Gospel, our enjoyment of God, the quality of our obedience, the purity of our motives for service, and the manner and effectiveness of our ministry to people. *We are what we think.*

C. Six Antagonists to the Sanctification by Faith Principle

We modern Evangelicals have a confidence problem: we have far too much confidence in the power of the law, far too much confidence in the power of our redeemed flesh to keep it, and far too much confidence in the use of guilt, duty and fear to move the process of sanctification forward. And what's worse, we are so confident in these tools, and use them with such frequency and force, it suggests that we lack faith in the love of God, the cleansing power of Christ, and the renewing grace of the Holy Spirit to deeply change ourselves and others.

Now we will quote from the works of several authors in the Reformed tradition which share the view of the *means* of sanctification we have just noted: that for growth in holiness to take place, our primary focus should be the law of God, and our best efforts should be exerted to keep it. These particular authors were chosen for a number of reasons: [1] their common emphasis on the external means of sanctification, [2] the fact that they have been formative in, and representative of, the prevailing view of sanctification in Presbyterian, Reformed, and conservative Evangelical circles, [3] their relative antiquity (so that the reader can objectively evaluate the source without an emotional attachment to the author), and [4] personal: until 1990, this author shared their views on sanctification. All of these works are in the writer's personal library and have been used as working sources for our pastoral ministry in preaching, teaching and discipling.

In regard to our "paper opponents": we affirm that there is much of value in them. We commend them to the reader's use—with this caveat: "*When they are good, they are very, very good, but when they are bad, they are horrid.*" We are deeply concerned about the inordinate emphasis they lay on the *external* means of sanctification. There is no heresy in them, but their lack of balance does lead to a dangerous underemphasis on, or even the virtual exclusion of the *internal* means of sanctification clearly taught in the Scriptures—faith. The danger is that the Christian will forget the weakness of his flesh, take his eyes off Christ, and trust in his own moral willpower to grow in grace. This is no imaginary hazard. We have been operating this way for some time, and the observable impact is: *first*, that our doctrine and practice have been polluted by an insipid moralism marked by spiritual pride, presumptive holiness, and the confusion of doctrinal purity with Biblical holiness. *Second*, the preaching of law as the antidote to sin incites disobedience instead of encouraging holiness. So, we are reaping what we have sown in an unprecedented lack of obedience to the moral law of God in the Body of Christ (in America and Africa). We do not question the good intent of these writers. Clearly, their emphasis on law was designed to avoid antinomianism and discourage licentiousness. The problem is that they have overlooked the *Biblical* means of sanctification (which would have suited their purpose) and opted for the law. The law has never proven an effectual pathway to the holiness of the heart.

Neither do we question the personal spirituality of these authors. If we could interview them in person (some are now with Christ), we might discover that some of those with whom we most disagree exhibit more of the love of Christ than some who intellectually support our position. J. I. Packer makes the point that imperfect doctrine does not rule out godliness any more than correct doctrine guarantees it. "*A little knowledge of God,*" he says, "*is worth more than a great deal of knowledge about Him*" (Packer 1973, 21).

Far from being an abstract academic exercise, this is a serious debate in which God's glory and the well-being his people are at stake. We hereby issue a call to the church of the Lord Jesus Christ—particularly its Presbyterian and Reformed branches—to enter into a period of self-examination and theological reflection regarding its view of the means of sanctification. We have sought to be careful in our representations of the teaching of these six writers. We have studied their entire volumes (in Ryle's case, seven of them) to ensure that our quoted selections accurately represent their teaching on sanctification. If we have erred in any respects, we humbly ask the forgiveness of those living, and trust we have it from those who are already with Christ. Our intent is to heal not to hurt, to contend for the truth without being contentious. We share the same goal as these men—to bring glory of God by our growth in Christlikeness:

Then the nations will know that I am the LORD (יְהוָה), when I show myself holy, through you, before their eyes. – Ezekiel 36:22

The six men we will be quoting are Anglican, Christian Reformed (Dutch) and American Presbyterian, and are cited chronologically: [1] Thomas Vincent (*The Shorter Catechism Explained from Scripture*, 1674); [2] Bishop J. C. Ryle (*Expository Thoughts on the Gospels*, Matthew, 1856, and *Holiness*, 1879); [3] Joseph M. Gettys (*What Presbyterians Believe: An Interpretation of the Westminster Standards*, 1953, thirty first printing 1979); [4] M. Eugene Osterhaven (*The Spirit of the Reformed Tradition*, 1971); [5] George C. Miladin (*The Reformed Faith for the World Today and Tomorrow*, 1974); and, [6] Calvin Knox Cummings (*Confessing Christ*, 1977).

As a reminder, we examine these authors with this question in mind: *what is the one thing they tell us to do more of in order to grow in holiness?* Read carefully and seek to discern what they are teaching as *the instrumental means* of sanctification.

1. Thomas Vincent (*The Shorter Catechism Explained from Scripture*, 1674)

Vincent's work is intended as a Biblical exposition of the *Westminster Shorter Catechism*, a question and answer teaching device which is appended to the *Westminster Confession of Faith* of 1646. There are 107 questions in all, covering the scope of Christian theology.

We are particularly interested in the *Catechism* question No. 35 "What is sanctification?" The answer is: "Sanctification is the work of God's free grace, whereby we are renewed in the whole man, after the image of God, and are enabled more and more to die unto sin and live unto righteousness." Vincent follows this with nine questions and answers of his own to exegete the *Catechism*. His questions follows. Our summation of his answer is found in brackets. (Question 7 is the most significant for our study.)

- Q. 1. Wherein doth sanctification differ from justification? [act for us vs. work in us]
- Q. 2. Whose work is the work of Sanctification? [God's not ours]
- Q. 3. Is there no desert [sign] of the grace of sanctification in any of the children of men before they are sanctified? [None.]
- Q. 4. Wherein doth our sanctification consist? [renovation into the image of God]
- Q. 5. What is the subject of our sanctification? [our whole man]
- Q. 6. Wherein is our sanctification begun? [at regeneration] (Vincent 1980, 98, 99).

- Q. 7. How is our sanctification carried on? [the critical question of *means*]
- A. Our sanctification is carried on by degrees, as God doth bless his providences, especially his ordinances, through them to communicate further measures of his Spirit and grace. (1980, 99) ¹

His section on sanctification ends with Q. 8. Wherein is our sanctification perfected? [our glorification], and Q. 9. What are the parts of sanctification? [1. Mortification of sin—reckoning ourselves dead, and 2. Vivification—yielding our members to God] (1980, 99).

¹ Note: Vincent *mentions* the Holy Spirit, but in his view, the Spirit is given "in further measure" by our use of God's "ordinances"—i.e. the *external* means: the word the sacraments and prayer. Faith does not appear. At best, his answer to the means question is vague. We are told to use the external means and wait in the hope that God will choose to act. The focus is on doing, not believing. Read the answer again and ask yourself: "What is the one thing he is telling me I should do more of to grow in grace?"

2. J. C. Ryle (*Expository Thoughts on the Gospels*, 1856, and *Holiness*, 1879).

As an example of what we believe is an unnecessarily strong emphasis on and trust in the law, we cite the writings of Anglican Bishop J.C. Ryle. In the 1856 preface to his six volume series, *Expository Thoughts on the Gospels* (1856), he expressed his desire that they be useful in several ways: as devotional reading “for use at family prayers,” as “an aid to those who visit the sick and the poor,” and, as “private reading as a companion to the Gospels” (1909, viii, viii). Ryle revealed his strong convictions concerning the value of the moral law for the Christian as he commented on Jesus’ words in Matthew 5: “*Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them*” (vs. 17). He explained correctly that Jesus came to fulfill the ceremonial law by becoming a sacrifice for sin, and that he fulfilled the moral law “by yielding to it a perfect obedience, which we never could have yielded, and by paying the penalty for our breach of it with His atoning blood.” With this we could not agree more. But then, as he called Christian parents, children, the believing sick, and the poor to holiness, he said,

Let us. . . beware of despising the law of the Ten Commandments. Let us not suppose for a moment that it is set aside by the Gospel, or that Christians have nothing to do with it. The coming of Christ did not alter the position of the Ten Commandments one hair’s breadth. If anything, it exalted and raised their authority. (Rom. iii.31)

. . . Let us beware of supposing that the Gospel has lowered the standard of personal holiness, and that *the Christian is not intended to be as strict and particular about his daily life as the Jew*. . . . The more light we have, the more we ought to love God. . . May we never forget our obligations! The Christian who is content with a low standard of personal holiness has got much to learn (Ryle n.d., *Thoughts*, 1:88, 89, emphasis mine).

We hear the same tenor in the exhortations in his 1879 volume, *Holiness*:

Genuine sanctification will show itself in habitual respect for God’s law, *and habitual effort to live in obedience to it as a rule of life*. There is no greater mistake than to suppose that a Christian has nothing to do with the law and the Ten Commandments, because he cannot be justified by keeping them (Ryle n.d., *Holiness*, 27, emphasis mine).

3. Joseph M. Gettys (*What Presbyterians Believe*, 1953, thirty-first printing, 1979)

At the time he wrote this 128 page monograph, Gettys was a professor of Bible at Presbyterian College in Clinton, SC. It was printed by John Knox Press (PCUS), and, as the Preface notes, is intended as “an introductory type of study for lay people”. . . “especially high school, college students, and young adults who would understand their faith more clearly” (Gettys 1953, *Preface*). For its size, this book is amazing in its scope. It covers Presbyterian heritage, the doctrine of Scripture, the sovereignty of God, the trinity, the fall, man’s need of redemption, the means of salvation, our experience of salvation, and the church. Here we reproduce the first part of chapter nine as it appears in the book, with the exception of our comments and one brief summation, both of which are indicated by brackets.

[E. M. Gettys] Chapter IX

OUR MEANS OF SPIRITUAL GROWTH

INTRODUCTION

In the chapters that precede, we have established the fundamental principle that salvation is by faith in Jesus Christ. No amount of works, however good they may be, are able to bring us into an experience of salvation. Yet no person can be saved without being saved to serve. That is to say, we are saved *from* sin to a life of service.

This life of service requires the constant use of the means of growth appointed by God and revealed in the Scriptures. We propose to consider these means of growth in this chapter. As we do, let us keep in mind the fundamental proposition that while redemption is provided once for all by Jesus Christ, the Lord and Savior of believers, redemption is applied to believers day-by-day through the activity of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit ordinarily works through the means of grace with which we shall be concerned. [Note: This is an excellent introduction, but now we come to the critical questions: what are these “means of growth” the Holy Spirit applies to us “day-by-day?” And, what is the one thing he is telling us to do more of in order to grow spiritually?]

A. OBEDIENCE TO THE LAW OF GOD

By the law of God is meant not only the Ten Commandments of the Old Testament reinterpreted by the New Testament law of love, but also the whole revealed will of God. The large place given to the Ten Commandments in the Catechisms of our church

reflects both the importance of the law of God and the training of John Calvin as a lawyer before he became a great reformer. [*sic*]

[Gettys quotes James 2:18, and notes that faith without works is dead; that “The way one lives reveals the quality of one’s faith.”] When the Apostle Paul received his heavenly vision, he responded in obedience. That obedience became the secret both of learning the Father’s will and of gaining the power to do it.

A servant in the far east was observed to anticipate the slightest wish of her mistress. When asked how she became so adept at her task, she replied: “I made up my mind to obey every wish of my mistress immediately. By doing this I learned to anticipate her wishes so that she seldom has to express them to me.”

Believers who obey as perfectly as they can, come into a rich fellowship with God. They understand His will better and they gain power to do it. Thus they grow spiritually. Paul stated this principle well in his letter to the Philippians: “Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for God is at work in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.” (Philippians 2:12, 13) . . .

It is not too much to say that the believer can have only a stunted growth if he does not learn to obey the will of God. It has also been proved by the saints of the church that God works in us as we obey, not apart from our faith put to work (1953, 91–92).

Compare the Walter Marshall passage (p. 40) to Gettys. The remaining means of growth he treats (which appear in all-caps) are: B. Christian Education, C. Prayer and Worship, D. The Sacraments, and E. The Communion of Saints. The remaining chapters focus on home life, life in society, the future life, and our public affirmation of faith in Christ (1953, 92–99).

4. M. Eugene Osterhaven (*The Spirit of the Reformed Tradition*, 1971)

In the chapter “The Life of the Christian,” subsection A. “Life in the Holy Spirit,” Osterhaven says,

This biblical emphasis on the Holy Spirit was transmitted from Calvin to the Reformed tradition. . . .

In recognition of the Christian life as life in the Holy Spirit the Reformed Church avoided the error of “perfectionism,” the teaching that a Christian can live without sin in this life. . . .

In its objection to perfectionism, the Reformed Church is not indifferent to the call to holiness in Christian living. Indeed, its rejection of certain perfectionistic doctrine is in the interest of true holiness. This latter, however, cannot be achieved with an inadequate doctrine of sin and an abundance of exhortation. What is required is an

[Note: Watch for his *means*.] understanding of scripture, prayer, and earnest endeavor, all blessed by the Spirit of God (Osterhaven 1971, 113–15 *passim*).

The author goes on to lament the declining membership of the Reformed Church, and notes that many who have left it have been critical of its lack of teaching on the Christian life. He warns that the Church might be passed by if the “rank and file membership” aren’t firmer in “their resolution to live for him [Christ] by the power of the Holy Spirit from day to day” (1971, 116–17). The next subsection is: B. “The Ordering of the Life of the Christian.” Here Osterhaven says that “life in the Holy Spirit has order,” which involves “a conscious motivation for seeking to live as a Christian.” That motivation, he explains, is twofold, consisting of “gratitude and expectation, both of which have God as their object.” He writes:

Salvation is an objective accomplishment and a subjective experience: it happens outside the sinner and is applied to him inwardly by the Holy Spirit. The believer’s union with Christ, in whom he has been chosen from eternity (Eph. 1:4), underlies both and binds them together. His justification and sanctification are the two sides of the coin of salvation and a person cannot have the one without the other. It is important to emphasize this point because extreme positions have been taken emphasizing one doctrine at the expense of the other and consequently falsifying both (1971, 118).

In the remainder of the chapter he refutes several false positions on sanctification and suggests that “the primary motive for Christian service is gratitude for salvation” (1971, 126). In explaining how the Holy Spirit operates in the believer for sanctification, he says that the Spirit “sets Christ himself before the mind of the believers. . . this real Christ is the believer’s example. He is the perfect example because he is the holy Son of God and the new heaven-sent head of the human race. . . ” (1971, 130). Interestingly, Gettys defends Charles M. Sheldon’s *In His Steps*—a book frequently disparaged by Reformed writers. In a main section of his chapter devoted to a discussion of the role of the law in the life of the believer. He writes:

If there is any point of doctrine and practice that has distinguished the Reformed Church from other Christian confessions it is precisely this one concerning the place of the law in the life of the Christian. From the time of Calvin, the Reformed tradition has taught that besides the civil use of the law in society [First Use] and its pedagogical use by which sinners are led to Christ [Second Use], *there is a third use of the law: its function as a guide in the life of the Christian*. As an expression of the perfect will of God the law shows the believer how he ought to live in gratitude for the salvation given him (1971, 133, emphasis and numbering mine).

Summing up, it appears that Osterhaven's theology of sanctification sets forth gratitude as the motivation with the Holy Spirit acting as the Agent by setting Christ before us *as our example* to keep the law of God. There is no reference to faith apart from his discussions of justification, and he seems to take pride in the role the law is given in Reformed theology.

5. George C. Miladin (*The Reformed Faith for the World Today and Tomorrow*, 1974)

This work is a sixty-two page Bible doctrine course for inquirers or church membership classes designed to "set in the forefront the distinctives of the Reformed Faith." As such it is an excellent source for the examination of another working theology of sanctification. How will this author instruct young Christians to grow in holiness? What *means* will he recommend? In his introduction, Miladin gives a preview of the course. "The five points of Calvinism" (TULIP) are to be its structure content. The "five points" (which bear Calvin's name, but were enumerated after his death) are: Total depravity, Unconditional election, Limited (or particular) atonement, Irresistible grace, and Perseverance of the saints). Miladin explains that he will "expand" the section on the perseverance of the saints. It is here that we find his view of the Christian life and his means of sanctification stated. He writes:

Inasmuch as the perseverance of believers does not exist in a vacuum, P is expanded to include a consideration of law, within which the believer experiences sanctification, in other words, conformity to Christ (Miladin 1974, 1).

The doctrine of the perseverance of the saints is covered in Lesson 8. Lessons 9 and 10 comprise the promised expansion: "God and His Sanctifying Work". Lesson 9 is entitled "Law as a Rule of Life," and 10, "The Summary of the Moral Law—Ten Commandments." Miladin begins Lesson 9 by saying:

The moral law summarized in the Ten Commandments is the sphere or horizon within which the Holy Spirit sanctifies and enables the true believer to persevere. The saying "love God and do as you please" is misleading, for love is motivational, not directional. We need direction, and this, Law provides. Law is said to be "love's eyes" (1974, 35).

He laments that R. J. Rushdoony's "monumental work *The Institutes of Biblical Law* was printed too late to incorporate its "valuable material into lessons 9 and 10," and proceeds to explain Romans 6:14: "Sin shall not have dominion over you: for you are not under the law, but under grace." He defines the believer's relationship to the law, negatively then positively. The negative is stated inadequately; the positive is dangerous for what it omits.

(1) As a means of condemnation (Rom. 8:1). (2) As a means to the attainment of salvation. . . (3) In the sense of being obligated to the requirements of the Old Testament ceremonial law (Eph. 2:14, 15). The believer *is* under the moral law in the sense of being obligated to fulfill its righteousness; also in the sense of delighting in it as his guide and standard, the horizon within which he demonstrates by the grace of God his love for Jesus Christ (1974, 25).

6. Calvin Knox Cummings (*Confessing Christ*, 1977)

This is a 69 page booklet for use by the Orthodox Presbyterian Church and the Presbyterian Church in America (the author's denomination) as a textbook for instructing those who are making a first-time public profession of faith. Its outline is as follows:

I. The Bible—The Basis of Our Confession; II. Christ—The One We Confess; III. Repentance and Faith—Requirements of a True Confession; IV. The Christian Life—Living Our Confession; V. The Church—Uniting With Others in Our Confession; VI. The Word, The Sacraments and Prayer—Means of Grace for Christian Confession; and VII. Confession Christ to Others—Qualifications and Methods (1977, *Contents*).

For our purposes, we will focus on the theology of the Christian life presented in Chapter IV. "The Christian Life—Living Our Confession." It begins with the excellent statement that salvation is not meant to be an end in itself, but is a blessing that should issue in a life lived to the glory of God. Here are the heading and our thumbnail synopsis: *The Purpose of the Christian Life* [to glorify and enjoy God —"Both are realized only as we strive against sin. This bring us to the next step in the Christian life.]; *The Divine Rule for the Christian Life* [the Ten Commandments—these are numerated and explained according to this pattern, "Commandment I — The Rule of Religion; Commandment II — The Rule of Worship," etc., ending with: "Commandment X — The Rule of the Heart under which the law of covetousness is explained"] (1977, 30-37). Then Cummings states:

The law of the Christian life is essentially the law of love. Christ summarized these commandments in the words: "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself'" (Matthew 22:37-39).

The essence of the Christian life is that in response to the gift of God's saving love to us in Christ, we give our whole selves to him. We say with John Calvin, "My heart, O Lord, I give to thee, promptly and sincerely." Because we love him, we want to keep his commandments. Because we love him, we shall love his children, whether by creation or by redemption. If we truly love God, we cannot help but love his children (Cummings 1977, 38).

He ends this chapter with a paragraph entitled, *Strength for the Christian Life*. Up to now he has not informed us about *where* our strength might come from, but this heading alerts us that he is about to disclose the means by which we will be able to accomplish what we have been instructed to do. Perhaps the mere knowledge of our duty is sufficient? Watch closely for his answer to our question, "*What is the one thing we should do more of...*?"

How can we live such a life of passionate love for God and for man? We cannot live such a life in our own strength. Never are we so sure to fail in our Christian lives as when we think that in our own strength we can do so. "Apart from me you can do nothing," Christ warned (John 15:5). But in Christ, Paul said, we can do anything. "I can do everything through him who gives me strength" (Philippians 4:13). The chief means that God has provided for our spiritual nourishment and growth in grace is his

word. If we are to grow in grace, therefore, it is essential that we be faithful in the reading and studying of God's word, and in our attendance upon the preaching of God's word.

"Faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ" (Romans 10:17). "Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth" (John 17:7). "And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit" (II Corinthians 3:18).

God has also provided the word, the sacraments and prayer as means of grace. We shall discuss them separately in a later chapter (1977, 38).

Cummings approach to the Christian life is unique and somewhat superior to the other authors we have quoted, but given that his work is intended to guide the young, its deficiencies are all the more serious. We will speak to these now, and refer back to the other men later. First, Cummings structures the Christian life around the Ten Commandments rather than the believer's union with Christ. Is this not an Old Covenant model? Where is a Christian to focus—on Moses or Christ, the law or the Gospel? More is said about love as the intent of the law than in the other writers, but there is an underlying flaw: where can we find the power to love? Having observed that we cannot live the Christian life in our own strength, the alternate source of strength he offers is the Bible. On the surface, this seems a wise choice, but the Bible, like the sacraments and prayer, is an *external or dependent* means of sanctification. Cummings does mention faith, but for him, "our faithfulness in the reading and study of God's word and in our attendance upon the preaching" of it is the *engine* of sanctification. *Of course we affirm that the Scriptures are an essential means of growth!* The Bible is God's objective, inspired, inerrant and infallible word. *But it does not operate for sanctification automatically, or apart from faith*, and therein lies our chief difficulty with Cummings. Assigning youth to read the Bible and listen to sermons will not ensure their growth. Union with Christ will.

In his 1872 work, *The Adoption of Sons*, Scottish Presbyterian author Thomas Houston encouraged us in the use of the Word, the sacraments and prayer. He said: "*Seek the means by which faith is excited, exercised, confirmed and increased*" (1872, 241)—and that is pre-

cisely our point: our faith must be operative in the process of spiritual growth. The Bible is not a magic talisman that produces spiritual life anytime it is read or heard. We have all had dry times when the Bible seemed like dust in our mouths and even the best preaching did not profit us. The cure for our spiritual malaise is to go straight to Christ in faith, cry out to him for cleansing and the renewing of the Holy Spirit. *Then*, as the Holy Spirit blesses our weak faith, the Scriptures will refresh us. Cummings reverses the order in sanctification by substituting a *dependent means* of sanctification for the *efficient means*—vigorous personal faith in Jesus.

D. Clarifying The Doctrine at Risk *and* Our Purpose for this Study

1. Clarifying the Doctrine at Risk: Faith as the Means of Sanctification

From this point forward, we will be able to refer back to the excerpts from these six authors to compare and contrast them with Scripture and the writings of others. Our purpose will be to set forth and prove our thesis: *that the New Covenant means of sanctification is faith in Jesus Christ, not our efforts to fulfill the “works of the law”* (Gal. 3:1-5). Again, we affirm that there is much value in the writings of the men we will critique. Our disagreement with them is *at one point*: They teach that *our doing* is to be the focus. We teach that our conscious union with Jesus Christ by faith is the means of sanctification; that our obedience to the moral law is a passive fruit and consequence of that faith, and that “the means of grace” are effectual only as they are “means to faith,” i.e. means to increase the vitality of our personal union with Christ.

Our Dual Concern With the Theology of these Six Authors

a) They place an inordinate emphasis on the moral law as commandment, and seem to labor under the assumption that our knowledge of the demands of the law and our desire to keep it are sufficient to enable us to walk in obedience.

b) Their theology of sanctification is more Mosaic than Pauline. Great emphasis is placed on

the law, but little or none on *the instrumental means* of holiness: a vital, personal, daily, dependent union with Jesus Christ *by faith*—faith which gives us the Spirit and his fruit (Gal. 3:1-5).

2. Clarifying Our Purpose for this Study

Our Sanctification to the Glory of God in the Church and the World

"*The way of most minister's preaching is too legal,*" wrote Horatius Bonar in 1860 (1995, 31). Bonar, born in 1808, was a minister in the Presbyterian Church of Scotland and author of the much-loved communion hymn "Here O My Lord I See Thee Face to Face." His little book, *Words to the Winners of Souls* is a passionate lament over the sad spiritual condition of the ministers of the Gospel, a personal confession, and a call for his fellow ministers to repent with him of their sins of distance from Christ, their self-love, their preaching of themselves, their lust for personal glory, their perversions of the Gospel, their neglect to shepherd God's flock, and their lack of zeal in winning the lost. But Bonar's book is much more than just a commentary on the church of *his* day. A large portion of it is quoted from a list of sins drawn up two-hundred years earlier in 1651 by the Church of Scotland as a lament over the spiritual condition of its ministers—including this charge that their preaching was "too legal" (1995, 25–34). Not only did the sin of legalism prove difficult for our Scottish Presbyterian forbears to eradicate, it is still with us today, infecting our Evangelical and Reformed thinking, writing, preaching and parenting like The Plague.

If the doctrinal deficiencies of our six antagonists were not immediately apparent to the reader, at this juncture we may appear harsh, unnecessarily critical, or both. We trust that as we open up the Scriptures and examine the writings of other scholars who have understood these issues clearly, our ability to discern will be enhanced. But abstract theological correctness, as desirable as that is, is not our goal. We want the Holy Spirit to translate the knowledge we gain into a sound Biblical methodology of training our students, parishioners, and families to walk in Christlike love to the glory and praise of God.

CHAPTER 3

THE ROLE OF THE LAW IN NEW COVENANT LIFE: PART 1

The Three Uses of the Law

But now, by dying to what once bound us, we have been released from the law so that we serve in the new way of the Spirit, and not in the old way of the written code.

– The Apostle Paul

Let us beware of supposing that the Gospel has lowered the standard of personal holiness, and that the Christian is not intended to be as strict and particular about his daily life as the Jew!

– Bishop J. C. Ryle

The law as God's standard still remains valid, but the coming of Christ has affected the function of the law in the Christian life.

– Donald Guthrie

A. Our View of the Law: We Uphold It!

The Antinomian Question

We once asked Dr. Jack Miller about the difference between the sin of self-justification, and the wisdom of self-explanation. He suggested that we do our best to anticipate objections and answer them beforehand, though he admitted that for him, the tactic had rarely worked. He said:

Before I start doing something, I explain what I am about to do. While I am doing it I explain what I am doing. When I have finished doing it, I explain what I have done, and still, I am misunderstood

With that word to the wise, and the grim charge of “Antinomian!” hanging over any who dare to question the efficacy of the law, let us state clearly that: We do *not* abrogate the law, despise the law, attack the law, imply that it is evil, or suggest that it should be regarded

lightly. In stark contrast to those things, we uphold the law, agree that it is holy, righteous and good, and state that without reservation that we desire with all our hearts to fulfill both its outward and inward demands to the glory of God. The moral law as summarized in the Ten Commandments *has* been the will of God for man since his creation, *is* the will of God for man now, and *shall be* the will of God for man forever. Jesus says emphatically,

I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished. Anyone who breaks one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever practices and teaches these commands will be called great in the kingdom of heaven (Matt. 5:18, 19, NIV).

Clearly, the law is and will be in force “until everything is accomplished”—until the final *eschaton* [ἐσχατοῦ] when the King returns and the Kingdom comes in all of its fullness, when paradise is regained and we the redeemed are made perfect to know, love and do all the will of God from the heart. How, then, can we profane the law?

In the mid-19th century, the Reformed Church in Holland became embroiled in a debate over the proper use of the law. Rev. Kohlbrugge preached a sermon from Romans 7:14 on the spiritual nature of the law, whereupon Isaak Da Costa (d. 1860) published a tract attacking Kohlbrugge, charging him with antinomianism. According to G. C. Berkouwer, Kohlbrugge was “deeply scandalized” by this criticism, and responded with a stringent denial that he would never hold such a position since he considered antinomianism “*the very excrement of hell*” (Berkouwer 1953, 102; NIDCC 1974, 280). And so it is.

Although antinomians and their doctrine deserve our strongest censure, we must take care to avoid censoriousness. James’ admonishes those who looks into “the mirror of the law,” and walk away forgetting what they have seen (1:23–25). What does the best of us see when we look into the Royal Law of love? (2:8) We see a shocking inability to keep

it. None of us has lived a single hour of our lives in perfect love to God and our neighbor. The truth is, we are all *practicing* antinomians. So, if we happen to hold a sound position on some doctrine, it is all of grace—not our superior wisdom.

In the *SONSHIP for Africa* course, our concern is never *whether* God would have us “fulfill the righteousness” of the law, but *what* that implies, *how* we are to do it, and *where* we are to focus our energies in the process.

B. *Tertius Usus Legis* – The Three Uses of the Law

Having determined the binding nature of the law, the next issue confronting us is the proper use of the law. This is a subject that has been surrounded by controversy from its first appearance in the Galatian churches, and has continued to be so from the time of the Reformation. It is a critical question, for our view of the proper *use* of the law in the Christian life will determine the *place* the law will assume in our conscious life (our focus) as we pursue holiness. To remind us of the “three uses” of the law, we quote Osterhaven again:

From the time of Calvin the Reformed tradition has taught that besides the civil use of the law in society and its pedagogical use by which sinners are led to Christ, there is a third use of the law: its function as a guide in the life of the Christian. As an expression of the perfect will of God the law shows the believer how he ought to live in gratitude for the salvation given him (Osterhaven 1971, 133).

To clarify, here are “the three uses” stated again:

- 1st Use: The Civil Use: To show men their sin, and to “restrain sin.”
- 2nd Use: The Pedagogical Use: To lead men to Christ.
- 3rd Use: A Rule of Life for the Believer

Who first defined these “three uses?” John Calvin, it is presumed. “Pop theology” likes to compare Calvin and Luther by saying that Calvin was a legalist, and Luther an antinomian—interested only in an “external” faith for justification. G. C. Berkouwer

considers that to be slander against Luther. He writes that *"to anyone who has had a whiff of Luther's writing, this conception is incredible"* (1952, 29). Berkouwer is right. Luther's books fairly reek (as with Limburger cheese) with the idea that justification does and must transform the inner man.

By now the reader may have guessed: It was Luther, not Calvin, who first defined and defended the much debated "third use." Luther wrote a treatise on the application of the Ten Commandments, coined the term "catechism," and wrote *Kleiner Katechismus* (1529) that included questions and answers on what each of the Ten Commandments forbade and required. It is Luther's catechism, not Calvin's work, that set both the form and the "staple components" for the 17th century Reformed catechisms used today (NIDCC 1978, 199–200). [cf. the *Heidelberg Catechism* (1563), *Westminster Shorter Catechism* of the Presbyterians (1647), *Keach's Catechism* of the Baptists (1689)].

What is the source of these aspersions against Luther? Berkouwer notes that the Reformer was so vehement in his emphasis on the superabundance of grace, that it led him to commit "a thousand sinful enormities in a day"—passionate sentiments that welled up from his soul in moments of reflection on the wonders of grace in contrast with the dead doctrine had abandoned and that was still oppressing millions. Perhaps his most infamous utterance is, *"Sin bravely, but be even braver in the faith and rejoice in Christ who is the victor over sin and death and the world!"* (Berkouwer 1952, 34). It is true. Luther's vocal perceptions about the limits of the law had a way of offending those who valued it too highly, either as a means of justifying the sinner or sanctifying the believer. Listen to this pair of litanies drawn from his various writings:

"The Law commands, but reveals impotence;" "The law directs me to life, but it does not give me life;" "The Law merely prescribes, but Grace inscribes;" "In justification

spurn the law; otherwise exalt it;" "The Law is a yoke for drudges" (Plaas 1959, 754-62 *passim*).

What Luther's detractors have failed to read is:

"The Law must crush a man;" "The Law is God's hammer;" "The Law makes a man appreciate Christ;" "The Ten Commandments are a lifelong lesson;" "Learn and teach the First Table first" (Plaas 1950, 751-62 *passim*).¹

Why this ambivalence? Was Luther theologically schizophrenic? Which sayings are his and which belong to others? Which are true? They are *all* Luther, and they are *all* true, and until we are able to join him in affirming them all, we will fail to understand the law rightly, stumble in our use of it, and risk becoming either frigid nomians or flaming antinomians.

First, our failure to keep the Law is remitted through Christ, and sin is entirely and completely forgiven. But not in such a way or to the end that henceforth we need not keep the Law and may go on sinning, or that one may teach thus: "If you have faith, you need no longer to love God and your neighbor." On the contrary, sin is forgiven so that a man may now begin to keep the Law. This is the eternal, unalterable, and immutable will of God; therefore it is necessary to preach grace that a man may be advised and helped to attain this keeping of the Law (Plaas 1959, 764).

Luther understood something that has been lost by many Evangelical and Reformed writers since—that we are enabled to keep the law by faith and the Spirit, and not by focusing on the law and striving in our own energy to keep it. But, we need the law! Before men can feel the need of a savior, they must first see their sin—which brings us to the "first use" of the law.

¹ Hopefully what we have laid on the table from Luther's larder has caused the reader to want more. We commend him to you as the most stimulating commentator of the Scriptures we have found. Begin with his Lectures on Galatians—"the Christian's Declaration of Independence." You will find his love for the Gospel infectious! His doctrinal flaws lie primarily in sacramental views—most notably on baptism.

1. “The First Use” – The Civil Use: To Reveal and Restrain Sin

a) The “First Use” Defined

We may speak of two aspects of the “first use,” *revealing* and *restraining*, and two spheres of these effects—*civil* and *personal*. We human beings are fallen, selfish, self-centered loveless creatures. If we were a race of hermits who got together only to procreate, or if we all loved one another perfectly, we wouldn’t need civil laws. Unfortunately, we are societal, and habitually enjoy trampling the right of others to get what we want. We form societies, large and small—friendships, families, extended families, clans, tribes, townships, cities, and nations. Every one of those societies has rules—rules to prevent chaos. Friends have rules, though perhaps they are tacit, not formal; families have rules (who will earn, buy, cook, clean, inherit), and nations have the U.N. Imagine a city where everyone owns a car, but where the roads have no right and left lanes to govern traffic flowing in opposite directions, and there are no traffic signs, signals, or speed limits. You get the picture. The very fact that we *need* civil law reveals our sinfulness, and as law, it punishes the offender, and rewards the obedient (Rom. 13:1–7).

But our chief interest here is the law as a revealer and potential restrainer of *our* sin. Paul felt the sting of the law when he met its “first use” head-on:

What shall we say, then? Is the law sin? *Certainly not! Indeed I would not have known what sin was except through the law.* For I would not have known what coveting really was if the law had not said, “Do not covet.” But sin, seizing the opportunity afforded by the commandment, produced in me every kind of covetous desire. . . (Rom. 7:7–8, emphasis mine).

Luther pointed out that the first work of the law is to show us our utter inability to keep even one letter of it. When you feel *that*, he said, then the law has done its work. This is what St. Paul means when he says to the Romans (3:20): ‘By the Law is the knowledge of sin’” (Plass 1959, 757).

b) The Misuse of the First Use

But, let us not rejoice in the “first use” too quickly. People habitually “kick against the goad” of the civil law. It may restrain sin by threat of punishment, but such unwilling compliance hardly constitutes holiness. And, in the personal sphere, as Luther said, “without the Gospel, the Law is ugly and terrible” (Plaas 1959, 739). What he is referring to is that there is no victory over sin in the mere discovery of sin.

There is a legitimate use of the “first use” *and* a misuse of it, and here we can see the first and third uses of the law bleeding into one another—the law as a revealer of sin, and the law as a rule for the Christian life. Christians who teach and preach the law, assuming that sinful behavior can be changed by the mere recitation of commandments (to which are often added grave threats and warnings), are mistaken. We have noted the ponderous tone of Ryle’s expositions. Commenting on Jesus’ “new commandment” to love in John 15:12, he said:

Where there is no Christlike love, there is no grace, no work of the Spirit, and no reality in our religion. Blessed are they that do not forget Christ’s commandment! They are those who shall have right to the tree of life, and enter the celestial city. The unloving Christian is unmeet for heaven (Ryle n.d., *Thoughts*, 3:110).

Classifying Ryle’s use of the law here is difficult. He has commanded us to love—or else! Whatever “use” he had in mind, there is a threefold problem in his presentation, and here we will speak frankly:

First, it is unhelpful. There is no substantial information as to how we might be empowered to love. There is nothing of faith, and the Holy Spirit is mentioned only in passing.

Second, it is legalistic. The commandment is laid down, and compliance is sought by chiding and threatening the poor believer that if he doesn’t get himself down to the business of loving, he may render himself “unmeet for heaven.” We know Ryle better, but here he

is teetering on the edge of teaching salvation by works—in this case by the “work” of love.

Third, it is self-righteous. The preacher does not include himself in the struggle. Does he imply by this that he, unlike some others, *is* loving, and therefore “meet for heaven?” He does not include himself in the struggle, confess his faults, or admit to his desperate need of the Spirit. What the church needs today is men and women who will echo Paul’s laments in Romans 7 and his words to Timothy, “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the worst” (1 Tim. 1:15). When I look into the perfect law of love, I am ashamed at my lovelessness. None of us meets the standard, and so as we hold up the standard (as we must), let us be repentant people who freely confess that our need is as deep as that of our congregants or students or children. Let us not rely on reciting law, issuing threats, and heaping on guilt to change people. It will *not* change people—at least not into the image of Christ, something our own hearts and Biblical history easily demonstrate. G. C. Berkouwer in his *Faith and Sanctification*, drives home this point:

Far too often men have talked about the command to be holy in such a way as to mutilate the biblical message. It is certainly not enough for a man to say that he honors the law of God and for that reason strives toward holiness. The people of Israel offer proof that one may live in the climate of absolute imperatives and still perish (1952, 19–20).

The “first use” is a powerful weapon. It thrusts our sin and the curse of the law into our faces. Luther pointed out that having shown a man sin by the law, “the law has done its work” (Plaas 1959, 757). When it is obvious that a sinner is under conviction for his sin (whether a sinning Christian or a non-Christian), don’t leave him to squirm under the curse, don’t keep him in the “climate of absolute imperatives,” show him the glory of the Gospel—the only power which can deliver him from the curse of the law; lead him to Christ! Paul demonstrates this progression in Romans 7, where in very short order, he moves *from*

being “killed” at the sight of his sin, to being depressed over his utter powerlessness to overcome it, *to the resounding, “Thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!”*—and immediately on to the word of assurance in 8:1, *“There is now therefore no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus!”*

2. “The Second Use” – The Pedagogical Use: A Schoolmaster to Lead Us to Christ

a) The Second Use Defined Paul can also define this use for us:

But before faith came, we were kept in custody under the law, being shut up to the faith which was later to be revealed. Therefore the Law has become our tutor *to lead us* to Christ, that we may be justified by faith (Gal. 3:23-24, NASB).

The Greek literally says, “So the law was our pedagogue (παιδαγωγὸς ἡμῶν) to lead us to Christ . . .” The first century cultural baggage that goes along with the word, *pedagogue* is fascinating:

παιδαγωγὸς - A tutor, i.e., a guardian and guide of boys. Among the Greeks and the Romans the name was applied to trustworthy *slaves* who were charged with the duty of supervising the life and morals of boys belonging to the better class. *The boys were not allowed so much as to step out of the house without them before arriving at the age of manhood* (Enhanced Strong’s Lexicon 1995, #3807, emphasis mine).

Luther, and don’t miss the humor here, said that yes, the law actually *does* have a real part in our justification! And how is that? “*Per consequens*”—as a consequence!

To be sure, it does not justify; but it does drive a man to the promise of grace and makes it sweet and desirable. Therefore we do not abolish the Law but indicate its true office and use by saying that *it is a very useful servant*, driving a man to Christ (Plaas 1959, 757, emphasis mine).

That is a healthy view of the law: it is a “useful servant,” or, put another way, the law is God’s version of “Big Brother.” Some Bible versions use the word “tutor” to translate pedagogue, and that is acceptable—as long as we are careful not to pour our modern

conception of “tutor” into it. A pedagogue was an uneducated slave assigned to the wealthy sons of Roman citizens to keep them out of trouble, trouble of the “boys will be boys” variety—petty theft, fighting with other boys, and dalliances with little girls. The point is, pedagogues were not the first century equivalent of Einstein. Brilliance was not required—just brawn, a strong sense of right and wrong, and, of course, his constant presence as a roommate and tagalong. When a young man came of age, the pedagogue lost his job. So Paul says, “*But (now) that faith has come, we are no longer under a παιδαγωγόν*” (Gal. 3:25). And why would we be? Why do we need a pedagogue to drive us to Christ *after* we are already safely in the arms of Christ? Mission accomplished. We have exercised faith in Christ, graduated from the elementary school of law, received our diploma (justification by faith), our title (Adopted Son), our privilege (the full rights of sons), and the seal of our inheritance (empowerment to new life by the indwelling Holy Spirit of promise). Why should we leave the campus of Grace to trudge back into elementary classroom every day to listen again and again to the same legal lessons of our pedagogue?

Under the Old Covenant, the law was the mediatorial instrument, and Moses was the mediator. If perfect obedience was rendered by use of the instrument (an impossibility due to man’s inability—*not* through any fault in the law), salvation was assured. But Christ is the Mediator of a better Covenant! He kept the legal instrument for us, and so it can be said that “*In all he said and did, he removed the law from its mediatorial position and opened up immediate access to God...*” (NIDNTT 1976, 442).

b) The Proper Use of the Second Use

In a technical sense, the “second use” of the law should be restricted to unbelievers, as Paul has said, the law was our tutor “*that we might be justified by faith. But now that*

faith has come, we are no longer under the tutor" (Gal. 3:25). When our daughter Elizabeth entered preschool, we would hold her hand and walk her across the busy road from our house to "God's House Kindergarten." After a few weeks of modeling the "stop, look, and listen" drill, we stood on the front porch of our house and verbally coached her across, telling her exactly when to "stop, look and listen." After a few more weeks, we stood inside the kitchen and looked out the window, watched her cross, and had her turn and wave to us after each successful crossing. After a few weeks more, we stopped watching. Our pedagogical work was done. Elizabeth had the law "written on her heart," and had become a first-class, safe-street-crossing "*stop, look and listen lassie*." She still is. That should be clear enough. The law was given, as Luther has said, as "a useful servant" to lead us to Christ, not as a lord to remain over us forever.

c) Why Sack a Perfect Pedagogue? (The Misuse of the Second Use)

Why not keep "him" around and on full-time duty? What can it hurt? Nothing, if we use him rightly—to lead us to Christ! What some Evangelical and Reformed teachers do is resurrect him, dress him up as Moses, rename him as the "third use," and have him rule over us *without* leading us to Christ! Our Tutor, then, becomes a bully.

Another way we misuse the second use is more subtle: We hold up Christ as an example of who we *should* be. We extol his virtues—his prayer life, his love for people, his selfless service to people, etc. But, we leave it at that. We show people Christ, but we do not lead them to the *Cross* of Christ where they will find mercy for their un-Christlikeness, and the strength to become Christlike! Thus we bully and condemn ourselves and others with the law. We quote the same reference from Ryle again to illustrate:

Where there is no Christlike love, there is no grace, no work of the Spirit, and no reality in our religion. Blessed are they that do not forget Christ's commandment! They are those who shall have right to the tree of life, and enter the celestial city. The unloving Christian is unmeet for heaven (Ryle n.d., *Thoughts* 3:110).

What good is it to tell us that we should be loving like Jesus, and to threaten us, literally with hell, if we don't become like Jesus, but withhold from us any information whatsoever about *how* to become like him? This is a misuse of the second use: the Pedagogue gives us the law, but he does not take us to the Cross of Christ.

Again, let us be clear. We are not suggesting that we do away with the law! Our problem is not the principle of law as law, or, with the content of the law. Our problem is with *the misuse of the law as a means of sanctification*. Let the reader be patient, for shortly we will advocate a healthy use of all three uses and demonstrate how all three are essential for the maintenance of a healthy spiritual life.

3. "The Third Use" – The Law As a Rule of Life

a) The Third Use Defined

In *What Presbyterians Believe*, Joseph M. Gettys promises to set forth the "means of growth appointed by God and revealed in the Scriptures." He goes on to mention that the Holy Spirit "ordinarily works through the means of grace with which we shall be concerned," and then lists the means, the first of which is "Obedience to the Law of God."

By the law of God is meant not only the Ten Commandments of the Old Testament reinterpreted by the New Testament law of love, but also the whole revealed will of God. . . .

Believers who obey as perfectly as they can, come into a rich fellowship with God. They understand His will better and they gain power to do it. Thus they grow spiritually. Paul stated this principle well in his letter to the Philippians: "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for God is at work in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure" (Philippians 2:12, 13). . . . (Gettys 1953, 91–92).

Without using the term, J. C. Ryle was a strong advocate of the “third use.” He wrote:

Genuine sanctification will show itself in habitual respect for God's law, and habitual effort to live in obedience to it as a rule of life (Ryle 1996, *Holiness*, 27)

The coming of Christ did not alter the position of the Ten Commandments one hair's breadth. If anything, it exalted and raised their authority (Rom. iii.31). (Ryle n.d., *Thoughts*, 88).

b) The Misuse of the Third Use: The Law as a Substitute for Faith and the Spirit

We have no argument whatsoever with the “third use” of the law—*if* by “third use” we are merely referring to the law as a binding moral standard for God's people. Unfortunately, many third use advocates don't stop at that. They proceed to put the law over the conscience and try to make it a “tool *for* sanctification.” The problem with that is that the law is impotent, and a poor substitute for faith in Christ and reliance on the Holy Spirit. The law can command; the law can demand, but the law cannot produce holiness. When Gettys identifies obedience to the law as *the means of sanctification*, he puts himself and his readers on the “slippery slope” of Christian Pharisaism—not a good place to be as you follow Paul's instruction to “work out your own salvation with fear and trembling” (Phil. 2:12) (1953, 92). We cannot emphasize too strongly:

Obedience to the law is a fruit of sanctification, not a means to it.

(1) Why Seek Ye the Living Among the Dead?

We have already seen that the law has a most wonderful use in driving sinners to Christ. But the *way* the law does that is by killing them—slaying them, obliterating their righteousness, and with it, any hope of gaining heaven on the basis of merit. Paul reiterates this in Romans 7:

Once I was alive apart from law; but when the commandment came, sin sprang to life and I died. I found that the very commandment that was intended to bring life actually brought death. For sin, seizing the opportunity afforded by the commandment, deceived me, and through the commandment put me to death (7:9-11).

So, how can something living (new obedience to Christ) be produced from something dead (the law)? Can the law enliven the heart—apart from conscious faith in Christ? Never! If it could have done that, Paul, of all men, would have been imminently successful at it. But it killed him, and it will kill us. The law must stay in the background of the Christian's life. *Keep it out of the foreground!* This notion that the law is the instrumental means of sanctification is the spiritual counterpart of that fantastic medieval article of faith: spontaneous generation. It was not until 1660 (14 years *after* the Westminster Assembly) that Francesco Redi, an Italian physician, disproved the commonly held belief that the maggots of flies were "born" from rotting meat and cow dung (*Encarta*, 1997). It's time we theologians caught up. Yes, the law is a signpost that points us to our destination, and a good signpost, but it cannot propel us one millimeter down the road. When we put law in the place of faith and the Spirit for sanctification, the only living thing left to fuel the process of growth is our own moral striving. Although Gettys *mentions* faith and the Holy Spirit, he had no clear practical theology of their operations. That is typical of much of our teaching about sanctification. We make a forceful mention of all the words that we know must have *something* to do with growth in holiness: law, grace, sin, Holy Spirit, striving, obedience, ought, should, must, and, we may even throw in faith—and leave people in the midst of the muddle, assuming that it will all work out in the end—but it hasn't, it doesn't, and it won't, because it can't. "A mist in the pulpit is a fog in the pew." Try as we may, we cannot grow in holiness apart from maintaining a conscious union with Jesus Christ by faith. (Fortunately, God has thousands of simple hearted Christians scattered around his earth who don't listen to preachers very closely, and who know this principle and live it out anyway. God is good.)

C. G. Berkouwer warns us, that when we are attempting to explain the process of Christian growth, we should be cautious in our choice of analogies:

The progress of sanctification. . . is a process comparable with no other process. Too often analogies and metaphors have done violence to its unique character. For progress in sanctification never meant working out one's own salvation under one's own auspices; on the contrary, it meant working out one's own salvation with a rising sense of dependence on God's grace. . . Thus we can understand that progress in sanctification can never consist in building up ourselves on our morality. Litanies of guilt [repentance] are spoken on the path of salvation, not only during the first stage of conversion, but, as Christ becomes more wonderful to us, in crescendo (1952, 113).

Berkouwer's point is well taken: Sanctification is a process that involves a repudiation of self dependence for helpless dependence on the grace of God. Too, as we see more of Christ, we will see more of our sin, and, rather than decrease, our repentances will grow—"in crescendo," he says. (and thus our *SONSHIP for Africa* lesson, "Repentance as a Way of Life" – S-10).

What was John Calvin's view of the "third use"? He made a fascinating distinction between the good use of the law as a moral standard, and the law as "constraining the conscience," saying that it has lost that power in Christ, so that we are "freed from the rigors of the law," and from the "fetters. . . of rigid and austere exaction, which remits not one iota of the demand, and leaves no transgression unpunished" (Calvin 1960, 2:417).

What Paul says, as to the abrogation of the Law, evidently applies not to the Law itself [content], but merely to its power of constraining the conscience. For the Law not only teaches, but also imperiously demands. If obedience is not yielded, nay, if it is omitted in any degree, it thunders forth its curse. For this reason, the Apostle says, that "as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them" (Calvin 1960, 2:417 on Gal. iii.10 and Deut. xxvii.2).

Calvin then notes that in Galatians 4, Paul says that "Christ was made under the law, in order that he might redeem those who are under the law". . . "That we might receive the adoption of sons." What does this mean? That we are no longer subject to bondage, having our consciences oppressed with the fear of death. (1960, 2:417). Our sonship signals a new

relationship to Christ and therefore to the law. We keep the law, but as sons, not slaves, and the law is not ruling over our conscience (or occupying our consciousness), Christ is—Christ as a person in a living union with us by his Spirit through faith.

(2) New Kit for a New Covenant

We would suggest that there is yet another aspect to our being freed from the supervision of the law. There is a *reason* why we don't need the law perpetually ruling over our conscience as a pedagogue. We are "in Christ" and Christ is in us by his Spirit. There is a new principle operating in our "new man" that renders the constant instruction of our old pedagogue redundant. Can we do without the law written? No, it is good to have the law written on stone to "keep love honest," but more to the point: *Where* did God say the law would be written, *when*, and *by whom*?

(a) The Prophets Speak The prophets Jeremiah and Ezekiel each gave us pieces of the puzzle, and when we combine them with the benefit of New Covenant hindsight, we have our answer:

This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time, declares the LORD. "I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people" (Jer. 31:33).

Therefore say to the house of Israel, "This is what the Sovereign LORD says: It is not for your sake, O house of Israel, that I am going to do these things, but for the sake of my holy name. . . Then the nations will know that I am the LORD, declares the Sovereign LORD, when I show myself holy *through you* before their eyes. . . [Sanctification] I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols. *I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh.* [Justification] *And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws* [Sanctification] (Ezek. 36:22-27 *passim*, emphasis and comment mine).

Jeremiah informs us that under the New Covenant, God will do a wonderful thing: He will actually write his law on the hearts of his people so that the stone tablets in the Ark of the Covenant and the phylacteries bound with cords on their foreheads will be unnecessary. Obedience will flow from within—from renewed minds and hearts which will contain the law. Jeremiah does not say *how* God will perform this miracle, but Ezekiel does. His Spirit will perform heart transplants, removing our lifeless, unloving, unfeeling stony hearts, and replacing them with tender hearts of flesh. And so, the “writing” of Jeremiah’s prophecy will be done on the new hearts of Ezekiel’s. But there is still more. These new hearts and this “writing” will not be enough to produce holiness. Law can never sanctify alone, no matter where it is written. *“And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws”* (Ezek. 36:27, NIV). So, the Holy Spirit himself will supply the missing element necessary for obedience.

(b) The “Second Printing” of the Law – On Tablets of Flesh Paul’s theology of sanctification builds firmly on the prophetic foundation of Ezekiel and Jeremiah, and the fulfillment of God’s promise through them in the Cross and the coming of the Spirit at Pentecost. Earlier on, we asked ourselves why we are no longer under the pedagogue. We wondered if there might be some reason for our release *other than* the fact that he had completed his work of leading us to Christ. We asked if there might be some other principle operating in our new man to render his constant instructions redundant. Now we have our answer. Under the New Covenant, we stand in a fundamentally different relationship to the moral law than our forefathers under the Old Covenant did. We are sons. Listen to Paul’s line of argument in Galatians 3:23–27. Particularly notice his complex use of “faith.”

Before this faith came, we were held prisoners by the law, locked up until faith should be revealed. So the law was put in charge to lead us to Christ that we might be justified by faith. Now that *faith* has come, we are no longer under the supervision of the law. You are all *sons of God* through faith in Christ Jesus, *for* [because] *all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ* (Gal. 3:23-27, emphasis mine).

That's it? Yes, that's it. Paul is saying in effect: *Faith (the Gospel) has come, and by faith (simple trust), we are sons. Sons are not under the supervision of the law. God looks upon us as righteous because of our faith in Christ. In his eyes, we are literally "clothed" in his Son's perfect righteousness and we "look like Jesus" (righteous) to him and are accepted as if we were perfect sons—as Jesus. We have become sons by faith, and by virtue of our sonship, the Judge of all the earth is our loving Father! "Clothed in Christ," we have a new relationship to God's law! Paul is telling us that this new relationship we have with God is in itself both saving and sanctifying! But there is more: The law has been "rewritten" in another location. The prophecies of Ezekiel and Jeremiah have been fulfilled. Listen:*

For when we were controlled by the sinful nature, the sinful passions aroused by the law were at work in our bodies, so that we bore fruit for death. But now, by dying to what once bound us, [the law as a covenant of works] *we have been released from the law so that we serve in the new way of the Spirit, and not in the old way of the written code* (Rom. 7:5–6, emphasis and commentary mine).

Paul, using the same idea, tells the Corinthians that they themselves are "a letter from Christ. . . written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts" (II Cor. 3:3). There are at least three ways in which this "new writing" by the Spirit beats the old writing on stone, hands-down. [1] We have new hearts capable of keeping the deepest intent of the law—love. [2] We do not need the written law held constantly before our eyes, because it has been written on the fleshly tablets of our new hearts. [3] As adopted sons of the Father, he has put the Holy Spirit in our new

hearts as an “internal pedagogue”—God’s “spy in the heart,” who empowers us—“moves us” to walk in love toward God and others—the fulfillment of the law.

Words like “being released from the law” (Rom. 7:6) throw Pharisees into apoplexy and libertines into ecstasy. But both have cause for anguish. Herman Ridderbos has the most insightful commentary we have seen on this whole class of Pauline passages. He comments on the alarm caused by Paul’s boldness in criticizing the law. He notes that the criticism is not leveled against the *content* of the law, but its abominable inefficiency. He says:

What is at issue here is once more two different regimes, the “old” and the “new,” of which the first operates only in an *external* manner, approaches man with that which is couched in letters, and therefore restricted in its sphere of operation to commandment—the prescription of “thou shalt” and “thou shalt not.” *Over against* this old regime of the letter stands the government of the Spirit, which, in contrast with the letter which is powerless and therefore leads to slavery, *has power over the heart of man and sets him free to serve God truly*. . . (Ridderbos 1975, 218).

As a piece of writing and consisting in letters of stone *it cannot touch the heart*. The Spirit stands over against it as “*the Spirit of the living God*,” *who is mighty to give what he demands, because he is capable of writing on the heart*” (Ezek. 11:19; 36:26; Jer. 31:33). [So, Paul says] . . . *we are ministers of the New Covenant*, not of the letter, but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life” (vs. 6) (1975, 219, comment and emphasis mine).

So here we are: We are in Christ, and Christ is in us. The law, our old pedagogue, the law written in stone is standing *behind* us—keeping us honest, shaking his bony finger to warn us that if we ever turn our back on Christ’s righteousness or forsake dependence on the Spirit for holiness, that we will land ourselves right back in his classroom, “locked up” under his tutelage where we will re-inherit the curse of the law (Gal. 3:10; 5:4). But Christ stands *before* us, and so our eyes are fixed on him (Heb. 12:2). And by that vision and in that relationship, we are empowered from within by the Holy Spirit—without the need of some external goad constantly prodding at us to motivate us to holiness. “Third use” theology is legitimate *if* we keep the law within its bounds, but dangerous if we don’t. The law

is, as Luther said, a servant. He warns us that if we are not careful with it, it will turn on us, draw our hearts away from the lordship of Christ and dependence on the Spirit, and set itself up as king in our hearts and ruler over our consciences—the proverbial “*slave who becomes a king*” (Prov. 30:22 NASB).

How can we keep the law around as a helpful servant, but at the same time avoid the misuse of the third use? There *is* a way, and as promised, we will reveal it, but for now, here is a hint: *use the law as “a means to faith” rather than “a rule of life.”*

In Ephesians 4, Paul sets forth a formidable list of the characteristics the “new man” in Christ is to put on and put off. One fair Sunday morning after what one pastor thought was a masterful exposition of these—he called them “Paul’s Christian Commandments”—a weary parishioner made her way to the front of the sanctuary where the beaming parson was basking in the praise of men—“*The Glorification of the Worm Ceremony*” as Howard Hendricks dubbed it. Rather than offering praise, the lady was troubled. She whispered that she had a question. Assured of sufficient wisdom, the pastor entertained it. “I hear what you are saying about the things we should do,” she said, “but where does the Holy Spirit fit into all this?” (There is that dreaded *means* question again.) The pastor, obviously flustered and at a complete loss for words for the first time in his career, had to say *something*, began: “*Hmm... I’m not sure, really...*” But then came a glimmer of light, followed by a spark of enthusiasm and attended by a suitable increase in volume: “*Here’s the way I see it: You have the Holy Spirit; you know what you’re supposed to do, and you have a new heart—use it!*” “*That’s it?*,” she said, “*just do it?*” Obviously she had missed what the pastor considered the brilliance of his answer—that the new heart had in itself the power to obey, so with a thinly disguised air of condescension he rephrased it: “*No, I said you have a new heart—use it!*” “*Oh.*” End of conversation.

Really. Was the pastor's answer so bad? He may have been more than a little confused about the "efficient," "instrumental," and "external" means of sanctification, but what did it matter? Does it matter *where* the law is written, as long as it is written? If we can read it on stone tablets; if we know our duty, isn't that enough? No. Under the Old Covenant, it was all they had, but "*on us, the end of the ages has come!*" (I Cor. 10:11).

(c) A Personal Word. If I sound a bit testy and dogmatic while writing about the importance of understanding the proper relationship between the law, the Spirit and faith in sanctification, it is because I *am* being testy and dogmatic. The testiness comes (I hope) from righteous anger—anger that for so many years, well . . . The ignorant preacher in the story I just told was me. The rest of the story will be told in our last chapter. My dogmatism comes from a strong desire to protect you from the sort of afflictions that a wrong understanding of law and grace can have on your soul. When I was child, I memorized the *Westminster Shorter Catechism*, as all good little Presbyterians do. I am grateful to this day that my mother had the wherewithal to keep me faithful. It is a wonderful document, impeccably Biblical, and can provide a child (or adult), with a solid doctrinal foundation. But, its theological *balance* could stand some improvement. Of its 107 questions that span the gamut of Christian doctrine and life, fully 46 of them (Q. 39 – Q. 85) are taken up with the Ten Commandments. They cover what the commandments are, "*what is forbidden,*" and "*what is required,*" our utter inability to keep them, and the "*wrath and curse that every sin deserves both in this life and that which is to come*" for any breach of them. True, every word of it. Too, the order of the Catechism is good: the commandments are first, and then the Gospel. But, at two per week (my best rate), the Ten Commandments took twenty-three months of Sunday afternoons to memorize verbatim, and the questions on how to "escape God's wrath and curse" (Q. 85) and on "faith in Jesus Christ" (Q. 86) took one week.

I was twelve when I finished. The church presented me with an award Bible; my name was printed in the bulletin, and I was left with the distinct impression that although Jesus had died for my sins, the rest was up to me. Jesus had vanished, and had left me standing in a very large room, staring at Moses. I *weep* as I write about this, and it is little wonder that the great hymn of my soul is Charles Wesley's 1742 affirmation of his own sonship:

Arise my soul arise; shake off thy guilty fears;
The bleeding sacrifice, in my behalf appears.
Before the Throne my Surety stands;
My name is written on His hands!

Five bleeding wounds He bears; received on Calvary;
They pour effectual prayers; they strongly plead for me:
"Forgive him, O forgive!" they cry,
"Nor let that ransomed sinner die!"

He ever lives above, for me to intercede.
His all redeeming love, his precious blood to plead.
His blood atoned for every race,
and sprinkles now the Throne of Grace.

My God is reconciled; his pardoning voice I hear.
He owns me for his child! I shall no longer fear.
With confidence I now draw nigh,
and "Father! Abba-Father!" cry! (*Trinity* 1990, 305)

What a hymn! Think of the Scriptures that filled Wesley's heart as he wrote it: The call to "keep our eyes fixed on Jesus" in Hebrews 12:2, John's vision of "a Lamb slain" in Revelation 5:6, the Interceding Christ of Hebrews 7:25, and the Spirit-given cry of sonship in Romans 8:15! This is the Gospel, the marrow of it, and it is living water for thirsty souls—mine and yours if we will only take the Living Water and drink (Jn. 4:10; 7:38).

Understand this: Until we *know and rely* on the love God has for us in the Gospel (1 Jn. 4:16), we cannot love God well; we cannot grow; we cannot obey from a willing heart and right motives, and our Christian lives will be a joyless, hopeless muddle. Nor can the little

ones we lead know of a Mighty Christ who will save and *never leave them*—unless we preach them *all of the Gospel* after we have preached them all of the law. So, let's preach the Gospel to ourselves until we really believe it—and then preach it to them!

(3) The Law Is for Lawbreakers — Not for the Righteous

Quite apart from the law's effectiveness as a *tool* for sanctification, Paul reminds young Timothy, the pastor at Ephesus, that he is to be careful to use the law "properly," and he must remember that its use as "law-work" is limited to *unbelievers*. For the believers in Timothy's flock, the goal is love, so Paul writes to him:

The goal of this command is love, which comes from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith. Some have wandered away from these and turned to meaningless talk. They want to be teachers of the law, but they do not know what they are talking about or what they so confidently affirm. *We know that the law is good if one uses it properly.* [What does Paul suggest, a proper use of the law might be?] *We also know that law is made not for the righteous but for lawbreakers and rebels, the ungodly and sinful, the unholy and irreligious; for those who kill their fathers or mothers, for murderers, for adulterers and perverts, for slave traders and liars and perjurers—and for whatever else is contrary to the sound doctrine that conforms to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which he entrusted to me* (1 Tim. 1:5-11, comment and emphasis mine).

Timothy was struggling in Ephesus to tame a pack of wild legalists, men who were going around "strutting their stuff," and beating up believers with the law. Paul said they didn't know what they were talking about, because the law is not *for believers*! What did he mean by that? He is not arguing that the law shouldn't be kept by believers, but that believers, by virtue of their relationship with Christ are "new creatures in Christ," the Christ who kept the law *for us* (11 Cor. 5:21). Christ replaces the law; his perfect sanctification subsumes our imperfect strivings, and our relation to him supersedes the more forensic [legal] element of the law" (Kittel 1985, 667). Timothy's ministry was to be a grace-ministry, not a law-ministry. He was to call people to holiness by a life of love:

"The goal of this command is love, which comes from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith" (vs. 5). Paul's point is a powerful lesson for teachers of holiness: Timothy was to strive to lead his people to love, to pure heartedness, a clean conscience before God, and a sincere faith in Christ. *Those things* are completely beyond the ability of the law to produce. The law can command them, but they are all the fruits of a "true and lively faith" in Christ.

There are times when our love of the law and our love of the Gospel seem to conflict. Donald Guthrie notes this, and says that some people see Paul's statements on the law and the Gospel as conflicting and confusing because the Gospel has both a negative and positive impact on the way the New Covenant believer is to view the law. After mentioning the "not under law" passages, Guthrie affirms the positive role the law has in our lives. The law is not abrogated; it is still to be regarded as holy and good, but, it has "a different meaning for believers," and is fulfilled (as teach Jesus, James, Paul, and John) as we live a life of love—which we will deal with later in this chapter. As to our relationship to the law as commandment, Guthrie says,

No longer is the law approached as a written code that kills (2 Cor. 3:6). It is approached through the Spirit. When a man turns to the Lord the veil is removed from his mind when he reads the Mosaic law (2 Cor. 3:16). The result is freedom through the Spirit. . . . For him freedom was not disregard from the law, but a release from being entangled by it (*cf.* Gal. 5:1). . . . In Christ, he approaches it from a new point of view. He is controlled by the law of Christ rather than by the law of Moses. The commandments of Christ have now become authoritative for him (*cf.* 1 Cor. 7:19), but these are developments from the law of Moses and are not in opposition to it (Guthrie 1981, 696–96).

Guthrie goes on to say that by the virtue of our union with Christ who kept the law for us, "in a sense, the law becomes inward. It no longer consists merely of external demands. . . the believer has become subject to the law of Christ (*cf.* 1 Cor. 9:21 - *ennomos Christou*)." Now as believers in Jesus, we are pleased to keep his commandments! (1981, 696–97)

(4) When the Righteous Are Lawbreakers: The Father's "Woodshed" –

The Discipline of Sons

Paul told Timothy, "*The law is not for the righteous, but for lawbreakers*" (1 Tim.1:9). Does that mean that believers are exempt from any form of correction in this life? Far from it. As in all points of doctrine, there is a balance to be struck here. *All* believers are lawbreakers. We break the law every day, every hour, and every minute. How? If we apply what we have learned about the spiritual nature of the law, we see that we fail in innumerable ways to love God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength, and our neighbor as ourselves. So, the question arises: What does God *do* about these disobediences? Here is where we need balance:

First, remember that David rejoiced, "*If you, O LORD, kept a record of sins, O Lord, who could stand? But with you there is forgiveness; therefore you are feared*" (Ps. 130:3). Obviously if the Father chastened us for every transgression of the law of love, we would live in constant daily torment. (Sadly, some Christians live as if God is holding a hammer over their heads, poised and ready to fall at the slightest provocation.)

Second (and here we speculate), hidden in God's secret will, there is a "break point"—a point at which his forbearance with our sins gives way to discipline. Since we have already ventured into uncharted doctrinal waters, we will not pretend to know anything about where this theoretical "break point" might be in any given situation. We only reason that it exists, and that when God reaches it, Hebrews 12 comes into force, and we "go to the woodshed"—an American metaphor for the physical place earthly Fathers choose to apply "the rod of correction" to their children. The writer to the Hebrews stirs his readers up to remember Proverbs 3:11, 12 by asking them:

And you have forgotten that word of encouragement that addresses you as sons:

“My son, do not make light of the Lord’s discipline, and do not lose heart when he rebukes you, because the Lord disciplines those he loves, and he punishes [μαστιγώω – scourges] everyone he accepts as a son.”

Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as sons. For what son is not disciplined by his father? If you are not disciplined (and everyone undergoes discipline), then you are illegitimate children and not true sons. Moreover, we have all had human fathers who disciplined us and we respected them for it. How much more should we submit to the Father of our spirits and live! Our fathers disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but God disciplines us for our good, that we may share in his holiness. No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it. Therefore, strengthen your feeble arms and weak knees. “Make level paths for your feet,” so that the lame may not be disabled, but rather healed (Heb. 12:5–13).

Observe that in this passage: [a] The promise of discipline is said to be “a word of encouragement,” not discouragement. [b] Chastening is a badge of our sonship, a sign of our Father’s *love*—not an indication of his rejection. [c] God’s discipline is not punishment (as per the NIV’s unfortunate translation), but rather correction. The difference matters greatly. Punishment is retributive justice. A sinner makes payment for (literally, atones for) his sin by suffering, and God’s justice is satisfied. God’s discipline of believers is always corrective, never retributive. Christ took our punishment—all of it—on the Cross. Yes, correction may involve pain, but it is *always* done in love, and with a desire to alter our behavior for his Fatherly glory, our good, and the good of others. [d] When we remember that sin is not merely “breaking rules” but a failure to love, we see that God’s chastening has this intent: to help us to become “better lovers” of himself and our neighbors, that is, to further an obedience *to* him that is motivated by love *for* him. Such obedience will by very definition manifest itself in love for others. [e] Under the Old Covenant, the law demanded perfect obedience upon the penalty of death for disobedience. Under the New Covenant, our eternal future is contingent on the active and passive obedience of Christ in which we have exercised faith unto justification. What *is* at stake for us is the continuance of our sweet

fellowship with God, a fellowship that, when broken, is always immediately restorable by the terms of the “exceeding great and precious promises” of the Gospel (I Pet. 1:4) that:

Since . . . we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus. . . and since *we have* a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled *clean* from an evil conscience. . . (Heb. 10:19–22 NASB); and,

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness (I Jn. 1:9 KJV).

c) The Proper Use of the Third Use – By a Recapitulation of the Other Uses

We promised to demonstrate the value of all three uses of the law for believers. Luther noted that the law can be a good servant for justification—*per consequens*—as a consequence, because it leads the sinner to Christ. In the same way, the law can be a great servant to the believer for sanctification—*per consequens*, for it leads him to Christ. We can demonstrate this principle from both the Westminster and Philadelphia Confessions of Faith. Without using the terms, they espouse the three uses of the law. Follow carefully what they say about the impact the law would have, as the believer tried to use it as “a rule of life”:

Although true believers be not under the law as a covenant of works to be thereby justified or condemned, yet it is of great use to them, as well as to others, in that, as a rule of life informing them of the will of God, and their duty, it directs and binds them to walk accordingly [third use]; discovering also the sinful pollutions of their nature, hearts, and lives; so as examining themselves thereby, they may come to further conviction of, humiliation for, and hatred against sin, [first use] together with a clearer sight of the need they have of Christ, and the perfection of his obedience [second use]” (*Westminster Standards* n.d. Chapter XIX Of the Law of God, 21. 1646; 1981 *Philadelphia Confession of Faith* of 1742 [Baptist] sect. 6, 39).

Notice here the real power of the “third use:” we look to the law as a “rule of life” but discover that we cannot keep it, either in its outward and ordinary sense as bare commandment, or in its inward and spiritual sense as perfect love for God and our neighbor. We see

our failure [1st Use] and that failure causes us conviction and sorrow, so that we are driven to Christ to plead for his mercy [2nd Use] so that we may experience afresh the forgiveness of Christ based on the merit earned by his perfect active and passive obedience. In that sequence, all the three uses of the law are recapitulated. The Christian life is a life of purposing after perfect obedience [3rd Use], failure (*cf.* Rom. 7) and forgiving grace in Christ. The law has no power or efficacy as “a rule of life.” It can inform our conscience, but it cannot and must not be allowed to rule over it (Calvin 1960, 2:417).

If the law can neither save nor sanctify us, what is its value? It serves as a high, holy and impenetrable wall against self-deception. It keeps us from ignoring or excusing sin, or defining it as only “known and willful sin.” The law stands against (though it cannot restrain) the intrusive post-modernism of our day that flaunts liberty under the guise of love. (Same-sex marriage are condoned; abortion and euthanasia are encouraged as “loving acts”; and, practicing homosexuals are ordained under the guise of “affirming their gifts.”) In this sense, law informs love. Libertines insist on living outside the wall. Legalists take refuge inside it.

Some Reformed writers such as Miladin are fond of reminding us that the law is the “sphere or horizon” in which “the believer experiences sanctification, in other words, conformity to Christ” (Miladin 1974, 35). Of course it is! Where else would we want to live but inside? But, there is more than one way to live inside! This is our point: It grieves the Lord Jesus when, while we are living on the inside, we keep our backs turned to him and our faces to the wall. The law is not to be our focus, he is. To focus on the law is Christian legalism; to focus on Christ is Christianity, and when we focus on him, obedience will flow in the context of our union with him by faith. Berkouwer notes that Article XXIV of the Belgic Confession, *and*, the other confessions that grew out of the Reformation

“walked in the ways of Holy Scripture” when addressing the subject of the source of sanctification because they

. . . proceed always from faith to works and thence back to faith. This interconnection and order is a typical feature of Reformation doctrine: thus maintaining the bond between justification and sanctification, over against the “abstraction” of good works. . . (1952, 42).

Christian moralists, on the other hand, do not begin with faith, but law. They spend their days “staring at the wall” on which the law is graven in stone. They are intensely interested in the law *as commandment*, and are more prone to use it against others, and as a tool for advancing their own righteousness, than as a sharp scalpel for surgery on their own souls. A form of godliness is produced, but not a life of mercy and love toward others. To the contrary, they bear the bitter fruit of a self-congratulating, cold, judgmental orthodoxy that leaves “real sinners” out in the cold. [See the testimony of a “recovering Pharisee” which appears as “*A Little Letter to Law-Lovers*,” Part I, APPENDIX A.]

Summary

An inordinate focus on law produces Pharisees who slide down one side of the slippery slope into legalism while the libertines they despise slide down the other side into license. The Christian who knows his Bible will understand that growth in grace comes in the context of his union with Christ, so his focus will be there—not on his “relationship” with the law.

In chapter 4, we will consider the spiritual nature of the moral law. In chapter 5, we will show that sanctification is the fruit of faith—a conscious union with Christ that the Holy Spirit is pleased to bless with his fruit which results in “*the obedience that comes from faith*” (Rom. 1:5).

CHAPTER 4

THE ROLE OF THE LAW IN NEW COVENANT LIFE: PART 2

The Law as Love: Its Dangers and Delights

A. The Law as Love – The Law our Delight – The Psychological Seduction of Law

1. The Law as Love: The “Final Exam” of the Christian Life

Controversy has always surrounded the relationship of law and love. Some scholars are so intent on protecting the law they neglect love. Others in an attempt to protect the purity of love, dissolve the law into love. To avoid these extremes, we will need to understand and do full justice to what the New Testament says about the law being fulfilled by love. Both law and love must be kept intact, and love must be given the *prominent* place in our teaching on sanctification—not the one-sentence mention some writers give it (*cf.* Miladin 1974, 44). As the following quartet of authorities will demonstrate, if the love of God and others does not have top priority in our Christian living, we have not even begun to “keep the law.” [See also Part I, APPENDIX B, “*Three Levels of the Law.*”]

a) Jesus, James, Paul and John: The Law as Love

(1) Jesus the Messiah – “Love is the Sum of the Law”

In Matthew 22, we are witnesses to a classic style of Rabbinical debate: Jesus is issued a formal challenge:

One of them, a lawyer [an expert in the Mosaic law], tested him with this question: “Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?” (Matt. 22:35 NIV, NASB).

What is happening here? The Jewish leaders are tired of being bettered by this popular, self-proclaimed Messiah. Having plotted to dupe the Roman authorities into crucifying him, they need to arouse public sentiment against him to preserve their image as the holy protectorate of Israel. In the hopes of provoking substantive charges against him, they have sent in their best man, the forerunner of men like Luther's notorious opponent, John Eck—same subject, different millennium. The objective in these contests is to pit your knowledge of the law, the prophets and the Rabbinical commentaries against that of your opponent. Jesus answers:

Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment [Deut. 6:5]. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself' [Lev. 19:18]. All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments [Rabbi Hillel]" (Matt. 22:36–40).

We can almost hear the Pharisees gasp. The son of David has slain their legal Goliath. By quoting Moses, but from Deuteronomy 6:5 and Leviticus 19:18, he avoided being entangled in Exodus 20 and went straight to the heart of the law by paraphrasing Rabbi Hillel (Gamaliel's grandfather) who said: "*What is hateful to thee, that do not to another; this is the whole Law; the rest is only its explanation*" (Eddersheim 1971, 236). This is classic Rabbinic debate at its finest. Jesus' "Golden Rule"—"*So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets*" Matt. 7:12—is Hillel revisited. (Comparing the two literarily, however, Jesus sounds like a poet, Hillel like a Jewish mother.) Jesus' argument may not have been new, but by bringing love to the fore, he ensnared the proud lawyer in his own trap, showing that the Pharisees were long on law and short on love. Indeed, they loved no one but themselves.¹ Notice that Jesus' rebuttal did not condemn the *use* of the law, but, as we have labored to show, its *misuse*. Righteousness does not come by the law; judgment and death do. Faith makes us righteous, positionally

¹ They loved their righteousness. See Jesus' startling condemnation of the Pharisees in Matthew 23. He publicly denounces them and warns the public of their hypocrisy. "*Everything they do,*" he accuses, "*is done for men to see*" (vs. 5). He follows that up with a scathing list of "Seven Woes" (vss. 14–29).

and personally. In daily practice, righteousness is measured in the currency of love—not the neurotic calculation of one's tithe in mint leaves and cumin seeds.

This was not the first time a Pharisee had approached Jesus with such a question. Luke records that “an expert in the law” asked him, “What must I do to inherit eternal life?” (Luke 10:25). Jesus, knowing the man's reliance on legalistic obedience to the law *as commandment*, answered by quoting the same summary of the law—perfect love to God and one's neighbor. The Pharisee was so stung by this, and “wishing to justify himself,” he shot back with what he thought was the perfect comeback: “Who is my neighbor?” What followed was not a pretty sight—the parable of “The Good Samaritan.” With that, Jesus dealt a final blow to all of us gnat-straining, camel-swallowing, mugged pilgrim-passers who are so busy scrutinizing the sinners “out there” that we don't have the time or the energy to *really* keep the law—love people. If we paraphrase what Jesus is saying, we have this:

So, you don't kill? Why not? So you won't be stoned for it? So you won't go to prison? Or, because you love your enemy and want to do him good? If you don't love him, you don't keep the law. So, you don't commit adultery? Why not? Because you love your wife, or so you won't ruin your reputation? Then you haven't kept the law. To truly keep it, love your wife as you love your own body, and love other women purely and serve them sacrificially instead of using them as objects of your lustful pleasure. Don't you see, the sinfulness of sin is in not loving.

We must understand this: God's purpose in giving us the law was not so that we would keep the rules, but see the “love behind the law” and love others. To think of the law in any other way makes a mockery out of the law *and* its Author. That explains Jesus angry denunciations of the Pharisees. In *SONSHIP for Africa*, we look at specifically how Jesus showed love to people. We do this because given the intensity of our self-love, as if the old commandments were not difficult enough, Jesus added a “new commandment:” [See: Part I, APPENDIX C, “*True Christlikeness*,” from the *SONSHIP* course.]

A new command I give you: Love one another. [What is so new about that? Keep reading.] *As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another*” (Jn. 13:35, emphasis mine).

Look at what Jesus says about the supremacy of love. *First*, he raises the ante on what it means to be holy. Now, love is not merely loving others as we love ourselves, but loving them as *he* loves us—with a sacrificial, dying love. *Second*, as Francis Schaeffer has pointed out, Jesus gives the non-Christian world the right to judge our profession of faith, and a litmus test by which to do it—our mutual love (Schaeffer 1970, 13). As if love had not yet been exalted to a high enough place, after praying for the twelve, Jesus prays for us (“those who will believe on me through their word” vs. 20) and adds yet another function to love:

May they be brought to complete unity *to let the world know that you sent me, and that you have loved them even as you have loved me. . . . I have made you known to them, and will continue to make you known in order that the love you have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in them [by the Spirit]*” (Jn. 17:23, 26, emphasis and comment mine).

Jesus says that *our* love for one another will play a real part in determining whether or not the world will accept his claim to be the Messiah sent from the Father. Here he has restated Ezekiel 36:22: “Then the nations will know that I am the LORD when I show myself holy, through you, before their eyes.” It is sobering to think that our ability to glorify God before the eyes of the world is directly proportional to the observable love we have for one another. Too, Jesus says that our visible unity will determine whether the world believes that the Father loves us as sons, and Jesus as his eternal Son. In 1970, Schaeffer issued a clarion call to the church, entreating her to repent of her divisions and unite spiritually (not organically) in loving community. He noted that our visible love for one another will be the one unanswerable argument, “*The Final Apologetic*” for the Gospel, before the watching world (1970, 15). Given that, the articles from Kenya’s *Daily Nation* recording pitched battles between factions in a number of churches are cause for the gravest concern (Vol. 2, p. 477, 478).

(2) James the Apostle – “Love is the ‘Royal Law’”

Listen, my dear brothers: Has not God chosen those who are poor in the eyes of the world to be rich in faith and to inherit the kingdom he promised those who love him? But you have insulted the poor. . . . If you really keep *the royal law* found in Scripture, “Love your neighbor as yourself,” you are doing right. But if you show favoritism, you sin and are convicted by the law as lawbreakers. For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it. For he who said, “Do not commit adultery,” also said, “Do not murder.” If you do not commit adultery but do commit murder, you have become a lawbreaker. Speak and act as those who are going to be judged by the law that gives freedom, because judgment without mercy will be shown to anyone who has not been merciful. Mercy triumphs over judgment! (James 2:5–6a; 8–13, emphasis mine)

James doesn’t gloss over the Ten Commandments. He mentions two of them, murder and adultery, and then shows they are sins because they violate “the royal law”—love. James knew those Christians were doing fairly well with the externals (the ninth and tenth commandments excepted, of course). But he told them to forget the self-congratulation. “Look at the way you are dishonoring the poor. You are making them feel unloved and unwanted—in God’s house!” In doing this, James highlights a much overlooked aspect in discussions of the law as love—that the quality of our love is to be judged by those whom we profess to be loving. If we had interviewed his readers about their feelings for the poor, they might have assured us of their love for them. In practice, they despised them in their hearts, and disgraced them during public worship! The poor in those churches *didn’t feel loved*; we’ll guarantee it.

Do our neighbors, parents, spouses, children, and the members of our congregation *feel* that we love them? As we evaluate the quality of our obedience (and most of us spend a fair amount of time either excusing or defending ourselves), before we hastily give ourselves “all A’s,” we would do well to ask the people closest to us whether they feel loved by us or not. If we are afraid to ask, what does that say about our professed desire to glorify God in all things by our obedience?

(3) Paul the Apostle – “Love is the Fulfillment of the Law”

Modern Evangelicals have a habit of memorizing key Biblical passages by chapter numbers. Ask any group of Biblically literate believers: “Where do you find the Christmas story; the love chapter; the faith chapter; the civil obedience chapter and the resurrection chapter, and they will dutifully answer: “Luke 2, I Corinthians 13, Hebrew 11, Romans 13 and I Corinthians 15.” But ask them where Paul’s “sum of the law as love” chapter is, and you will get a blank stare. Romans 13 is “already taken.”

Owe nothing to anyone except to love one another; for he who loves his neighbor has fulfilled *the* law. For this, “YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT ADULTERY, YOU SHALL NOT MURDER, YOU SHALL NOT STEAL, YOU SHALL NOT COVET,” and if there is any other commandment, it is summed up in this saying, “YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.” Love does no wrong to a neighbor; love therefore is the fulfillment of *the* law (Rom. 13: 8–10, NASB).

Here is Paul’s corollary in Galatians:

You, my brothers, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature; rather, serve one another in love. The entire law is summed up in a single command: “Love your neighbor as yourself.” If you keep on biting and devouring each other, watch out or you will be destroyed by each other (Gal. 5:14).

As with Jesus and Peter, Paul’s point is: holiness is about loving people, not keeping rules. That these two passages are little known and rarely preached in Evangelical circles is telling.

(4) The Apostle John – To Live in Love *is* to Live in God

And so we know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in him. (1 Jn. 4:16).

The Mystery of the Missing Table Has the reader noticed anything missing from the letters of James and Paul? In their zeal to emphasize that holiness is about loving others, *the entire first table of the law has vanished!* What has happened to “love for God?”

How can these men justify such an omission? Isn't this offensive to God? Isn't love to him infinitely more important than love to mere mortals? Having thought much on this, we believe that John and Jesus offer us a *possible* explanation:

First, God (who knows our hearts) had the Apostle John confront us with our duplicity. We make great claims about our love for God and our desire to give him glory. But when it comes to loving people, well, that's another matter. Follow John's argument: **Fact 1.** Keeping God's commandments is not optional: "The one who says, *'I have come to know Him,' and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.*" (1 Jn. 2:4) **Fact 2.** Faith in Christ and loving others *are* the very essence of keeping God's commandments: "*And this is His commandment, that we believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, just as He commanded us. And the one who keeps His commandments abides in Him, and He in him*" (1 Jn. 3:23,24). **Fact 3.** If we say we love God, but hate our brother, we break both tables of the law simultaneously: "*If someone says, 'I love God,' and hates his brother, he is a liar; for the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen. And this commandment we have from Him, that the one who loves God should love his brother also*" (1 Jn. 3:10, 21). **Inference:** James and Paul base their omission of the Second Table of the law on the same reasoning: It is useless to talk of loving God, if we do not love our brothers. If we truly love our brothers, it shows that we do indeed love God.

Second, Jesus himself equated loving service to others with loving himself.

Then the King will say to those on His right, "Come, you who are blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. "For I was hungry, and you gave Me *something* to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger, and you invited Me in; naked, and you clothed Me; I was sick, and you visited Me; I was in prison, and you came to Me." "Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry, and feed You, or thirsty, and give You drink? 'And when did we see You a stranger, and invite You in, or naked, and clothe You?' 'And when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to

You?” “And the King will answer and say to them, ‘Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of Mine, *even the least of them*, you did it to Me”” (Matt. 25:34–40).

Before we consider the work of modern theologians, we might summarize what these four Biblical witnesses have said regarding love this way: *The law is about loving people, not about keeping rules. If we are not loving people well, if they do not feel loved by us, we are not keeping the law. We desperately need Jesus’ cleansing and the Spirit’s power.*

b) Other Scholars Here we will cite the works of two highly respected New Testament scholars. They differ in the boldness with which they make their assertions (Guthrie is more reserved), but both warn us against the same trap: assuming that as believers in Christ we stand in the same position to the law as the Old Testament saints (*cf.* Ryle’s instance that: *the coming of Christ did not alter the position of the Ten Commandments one hair’s breadth. If anything, it exalted and raised their authority. (Rom. iii.31) . . . Let us beware of supposing that the Gospel has lowered the standard of personal holiness, and that the Christian is not intended to be as strict and particular about his daily life as the Jew . . .*” (*Thoughts* n.d., 1:89). Again, we affirm that the moral law remains in force as the will of God for his people, but Ryle fails to acknowledge that under the New Covenant, our legal position to the law, the way we think of it, and the way keep it, are all radically altered.

(1) Donald Guthrie Guthrie notes that for Paul, the law has been redefined.

It is no longer bare commandment, but rather:

. . . keeping the commandments is now dominated by love. . . (Rom. 13:9). He [Paul] considers that love to one’s neighbor fulfills the law, which shows a totally different approach from legalism. Love of this kind is possible only through Christ. It brings a whole new dimension to the understanding of the law. . . .

Legalism is replaced by love, which may, in fact, be more limiting than a legal contract, but is motivated by a more powerful urge. This change of approach to the law furnishes the real key to an understanding of Paul’s view of the moral law. . . his

approach to Christian ethics show that he recognizes that Christ changes a man's view of his obligations and this must inevitably modify his estimate of the place of law in the Christian life (Guthrie 1981, 696).

(2) **F. F. Bruce** It is interesting how commentators leap to defend the law when they deal with Paul's assertions such as "you are not under law but under grace" (Rom. 6:14), and, "we have died to the law that we might belong to another" (Rom. 7:4). These men get so preoccupied with defending the law, and trying to define what Paul *did not* mean by what he said, that after their explanation, he has said virtually nothing—except that we are free from the ceremonial law. For all intents and purposes they negate Paul and put the law right back where he says it does not belong—ruling over our conscience. Again, let us be clear that we do not argue against the content of the law, but against an inordinate *focus* on the moral law that belies a *confidence* in the law as an instrument of sanctification. Bruce comments on some of Paul's well-intentioned and overly-cautious interpreters:

But the law of love is a different kind of law entirely from that which Paul describes as a yoke of slavery. *Love is generated by and inner spontaneity and cannot be enforced by penal sanctions.* Reference was made above to the "third use" of the law in Lutheran tradition—its use to provide guidance for the church. So far as Paul is concerned, guidance for the church is provided by the law of love, not by the "law of commandments and ordinances" (Ephesians 2:15). In his letters he himself lays down guidelines for his converts and others, often couched in the imperative mood, but these guidelines mostly concern personal relations. Food sacrificed to idols, for instance, is ethically and religiously indifferent; what does matter in this or in any other activity is the effect of my conduct and example on others. If I ignore their true interests, he says, then I am "no longer walking in love" (Romans 14:15). . . .

This insistence on the law of love, instead of prudential rules and regulations, was felt by many of Paul's Christian contemporaries to come unrealistically near to encouraging moral indifferentism; and many Christians since his day have shared their sentiments. But unlike Paul's contemporary critics, *Christian moralists since Paul's day have tended to hold that, in insisting on prudential rules and regulations, they are following the implications of his teaching, if not his express judgments.* But we should appreciate that Paul conforms no more to the conventions of religious people

today than he conformed to the conventions of religious people around A.D. 50; *it is best to let Paul be Paul*. And when we do that, we shall recognize in him the supreme libertarian, the great herald of Christian freedom, insisting that man in Christ has reached his spiritual majority and must no longer be confined to the leading-strings of infancy but enjoy the birthright of the freeborn sons of God. Here if anywhere, Luther entered into the mind of Paul: "A Christian man is a most free lord of all, subject to none. A Christian man is a most dutiful servant of all, subject to all." "Subject to none" in respect of his liberty; "subject to all" in respect of his charity. (M. Luther, *Tractatus de libertate christiana*) This, for Paul, is the law of Christ because this was the way of Christ. And in this way, for Paul, the divine purpose underlying Moses' law is vindicated and accomplished (1977, 201-02, italics mine).

Here Bruce may be treading on the razor's edge, but we need to listen. Some Biblical commentators try to make Paul so "safe," that they muzzle, restate, and explain him to the point that had Paul said what *they said he said*—he would *not* have said what he said. We do God no favors when, in our zeal to protect the law, we call into question the sanctifying power of the Gospel, faith and the Spirit. This well-meant, but misguided replacement of the Biblical means of sanctification (faith) with the misuse of "the third use" of the law is what got Christendom into the doctrinal morass we are drowning in now. If our mistaken emphasis on and confidence in law is not the only cause of the shocking powerlessness and rampant sin that threatens the future of the church in Africa, it is *the major* cause.

We have learned that the aim of the law is perfect love for God and man. We have not yet shown clearly where we can get the *power* to love in such seemingly impossible ways. That will come in the next chapter when we consider "the obedience of faith."

2. The Law: The Believer's Delight?

Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers. But his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night. 3 He is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither. Whatever he does prospers (Psalm 1:1-3).

J. C. Ryle said: *The true Christian "delights in the law of God" (Rom. vii.22) (Thoughts, n.d., 89).*

The favorite "delight" passage we hear quoted today is David's "*O how love I thy law; it is my meditation all the day!*" (Ps. 119:97) We can add others: vs. 113, "*I hate double-minded men, but I love your law;*" vs. 163, "*I hate and abhor falsehood but I love your law,*" and vs. 165, "*Great peace have they who love your law, and nothing can make them stumble.*"

But, we have a problem. Even if we grant that David's use of "law" in this Psalm is to be limited to the Decalogue (i.e., excluding any reference to the law in its ceremonial grandeur which he may have intended to include in his approbation), it must be admitted that David's love for, and meditation on the law did not always stand him in good stead. Yes, his life is filled with amazing feats of faith and daring, but, we would suggest that our families, churches and congregations hope for greater things for us (and expect greater things from us) than David gave God's people and his family as a husband, father, and king. He was a man of blood (II Chron. 22:8), and a man of his time. We live in the age of the Son of David, the age of the Spirit— the Spirit of the Son of David who permanently indwells the hearts of his people. We would do well to heed the admonition of the writer to the Hebrews—to "*keep our eyes fixed on Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith*" (13:2) instead of spending our time peering into the shadows at a Decalogue we can't keep. Is it correct to say that the true Christian delights in the law of God? Absolutely, but only if we *look through* the law—as if it engraved on glass—so that our gaze falls onto the face of Christ, the one who kept the law for us. The fact is, our delight in the law carries no guarantee that we will keep it. Paul also expresses his "delight" in the law of God, and, it seems, with greater self-understanding than David. Saul the Pharisee might have written Psalm 18:20–26, but Paul the Christian writes this: "I delight in God's law in my inmost being," he says, but. . .

I find this law at work: When I want to do good, evil is right there with me. *For in my inner being I delight in God's law;* but I see another law at work in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within my members. What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? Thanks be to God—through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I myself in my mind am a slave to God's law, but in the sinful nature a slave to the law of sin (Rom. 7:23-25, emphasis mine).

If we want to continue to use this “delight” phrase, and, after all, it *is* a Biblical one, we need to use it in the context of personal honesty of the Pauline kind that takes into account our desperate and ongoing need of Christ and the Holy Spirit to keep it. Otherwise, it is nothing but a vain boast. If it is holiness we seek, we had best delight in the Lord, and he will give us the desires of our hearts (Ps. 37:4)—one of those being, we presume, a greater capacity for loving him and others. If we look at Christ, he will change us; if we look at the law, it will condemn us, because it cannot change us no matter how much we delight in it.

Summary Yes, the law is to be the believer's delight—but not law as bare commandment, or as the law of works. The inward, spiritual “*law of Christ*” is our delight (Gal. 6:2)—love to God and our neighbor—as Jesus, James, Paul, and John have testified.

3. The Psychological Seduction of The Law

Since we began this study, we have been battling a pair of nomistic heresies that have stalked the Christian church like plagues since the 1st century: antinomianism (p. 57), and legalism. What we do not often consider is that, with the exception of one of its Christian manifestations, they are only the visible fruits of a deeper root—“Siamese twin” pathologies. They appear to be separate individuals, but are joined at the heart—a self-righteous one. They contrast in way of life, but, share a common motivation: self-justification.

a) Antinomianism Antinomianism comes in two types, non-Christian, and Christian (also of two types). The non-Christian antinomian has an easy righteousness. He struts up to the blackboard where God's commandments are written and erases it. He says that even if

God is, his law doesn't matter. His view of reality consists of what *he* thinks is real. Van Til says of the unbeliever: "*Everything is made over by him according to his pattern. . .*" He has "*cemented colored glasses to his eyes, which he cannot remove*" (1963, 44). In the end, it doesn't matter two cents what unbelievers think; the law *is*, and they will be judged by it. What will the moment of truth be like for them? On the Day of Judgment, what they would normally have considered to be man's ultimate horror (having a mountain fall on him) will become their prayer: "*They will cry out to the mountains and rocks, 'Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb! The great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?'*" (Rev. 6:16,17 KJV). It will be an awful time—a dying time.

What about "Christian antinomianism"? It has two forms: *professedly* Christian, and Christian. The first is an ill-motivated, thinly disguised excuse for license. We have never actually met one of these people, but we read about them—Anglican homosexual churches in San Francisco, and Baptist wife-swapping clubs in Dallas. Why these people dabble in the Gospel at all is not certain, for a (false) sense of well-being, perhaps? To be sure, the glory of God has nothing to do with it, and John and Jesus deal with them ruthlessly: "*If we claim to have fellowship with him yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live by the truth*" (1 Jn. 1:6). "*If anyone does not remain in me, he is like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned*" (Jn. 15:6). Full stop. Why will they go to hell? For breaking rules? No, because homosexuality is not loving God and his plan for his creation, and it is using—not loving—your "lover." Adultery and fornication carry the same sentence. We don't break the law of God; we break ourselves upon it.

What can we say about truly Christian antinomianism—that it is purely-motivated and has a high view of the law as love? It does, but it has an overly-optimistic, foolishly idealistic view of the new heart. We are sinners with deceitful hearts. Sometimes we deliberately ignore the law written on our hearts. In chapter three, we spoke of the safety of "living inside

the wall” of the Ten Commandments. “Staring at the wall” doesn’t make us obedient, looking at Jesus does. But to climb over the wall and live on the outside? Don’t do it. It has a bad record—no wins. If we keep Paul’s balance in Romans 13 we will do well: “*retain to remind*,” i.e., he retains the commandments to remind us that only love can keep them.

b) Legalism The Law *demand*s righteousness; the Gospel *provid*es righteousness; legalism *imagin*es righteousness—and herein lies its psychological seduction. Legalism is the illusion of righteousness. Eugene Osterhaven, one of our six antagonists (2:48) is obviously troubled by the criticism of the Reformed Church (in the U.S.) as being legalistic. In his chapter, “The Life of the Christian,” after exposing the errors of antinomianism and perfectionism, he offers the best definition of legalism we have seen in print:

Legalism is the disjointed elevation of law to a position where it is absolutized and observed for its own sake. The rule becomes the thing. If it is observed, no matter how formally, all is well (1971, 136 emphasis mine).²

(1) The Motivation of Christian Legalism: Self-Sanctification

Osterhaven has done an admirable job of describing what legalism *does*, but not why legalists do what they do. All behavior is goal-oriented, that is, it has a purpose, a payoff.

² Osterhaven goes on to say that for the legalist, the relationship of the law “. . . to Christ and the Holy Spirit is forgotten and unknown. Christian living has degenerated to this in some communities in the history of the church and preaching has sunk to this level in some pulpits. Salvation has, in effect, come to be seen in terms of works-righteousness and the gospel is lost. . . .” (1971, 136). Here he comes right up to the point of advocating the position we will set forth in Chapter 5, however, as he tries to define the relationship of the law “to Christ and the Spirit,” he stops short. He does not say what *our* relationship to Christ and the Spirit must be for us to be empowered to keep the law. He is so thoroughly preoccupied with the law as a means of sanctification, he cannot take us further. He speaks of love as the fulfillment of the law (1971, 133), but never identifies it as the fruit of the Spirit, or tell us how faith in Christ gives us the Spirit so that loving like Christ becomes possible. He returns to the same old saw—the law: “Abuse does not invalidate use,” he argues, “and misunderstanding here does not justify the discarding of the use of the law in Christian living altogether. . . .” (1971, 136). We couldn’t agree more. The problem is that Osterhaven never finds the sound, solid ground of the Biblical position between legalism on the one side, and antinomianism on the other, and we are left staring at the law and more admonitions to follow Jesus’ example “as a guide through life,” to follow “the rules of the book” (1971, 135), and to obey the law “as a helpful friend” (1971, 136). But *how* do we follow? *How* do we appropriate Christ and the Spirit to help us to go on toward “true holiness?” “What is required,” he says, “is an understanding of scripture, prayer, and earnest endeavor, all blessed by the Spirit of God” (1971, 115). Osterhaven is fifty paces beyond Ryle’s scoldings, but ten thousand short of Paul’s doctrine of sanctification by faith in Christ through the Spirit.

What is the payoff in Christian legalism. Righteousness—the same commodity offered in the Gospel. Herein lies the grave danger of legalism: it undermines justification by faith, the core truth of the Gospel.

(a) The Law is Attractive to Our Hearts Oddly, many Christians would rather have the law rule over them than be forced to live *dynamically* in communion with Christ and be led by the Spirit. Legalism is a smug, self-congratulating lifestyle. We don't have to live lives of ongoing repentance; we live "above" sin by our law-keeping.

Legalism also takes less energy. You don't have to think; you just keep and enforce the rules. Life is ordered and orderly; you are in control. That was the allurements of Pharisaic life. The Pharisees woke in the morning knowing what they had to do, and they set about doing it—without a worry that either faith or love would intrude into and spoil their neat little system. Being right and looking good were what counted, and they excelled in both—right down to the tassels on their robes. You didn't sin, you obeyed. Sin was for others, and if someone sinned, like the woman caught in adultery, you stoned her. It was as simple as that. Forget that you have a lustful, unloving heart. [See Part I, APPENDIX D, "*Billy the Kid*" – Parenting by Law.]

We were teaching in a seminary in Nairobi on the problem of legalism and its failure to reckon with love as the fulfillment of the law, when a student, obviously perturbed, asked to speak. He stood with an open Bible and said: "*But I John 5:6 says, 'And this is love: that we walk in obedience to his commands,'*" and sat down. Either I had not been making myself clear (a distinct possibility) or, he was reacting to the bite of my teaching (another distinct possibility). Despite the fact that we had been vigorously defending the integrity of the moral law, and had emphasized that it *must* be kept, he felt he had to come up with a "gotcha" text. We looked up the reference, and found that 5:6a had a "b": "*As you have heard from the begin beginning, his command is that you walk in love.*" Perhaps this young man, like so

many Christians and churchmen on our continent, was obsessed with the law and law-keeping because it provides a sense of “rightness,” and worth apart from the need to radically love others. The human heart is easy prey for the law and its false offer of righteousness.

(b) The Law Offers Hope to Our Pride Legalism is an attempt to blunt what the Cross says about who we really are. When Jeremiah says, “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked, who can understand it?” he is talking about us, about me, not “them.” The law seduces us. It says, “use me to beautify yourself.” But the Gospel’s righteousness is alien to us. It humbles us to the point that we have not one shred of righteousness left. It tells us that our righteousnesses—not our sins—our righteousnesses are filthy rags in God’s sight (Isa. 64:6). But we Christians are busy! We are trying to make ourselves look good, trying to build up our reputations, and protect ourselves from criticism so that we can look righteous. Not only do we build ourselves up, we feel an inner compulsion to dwell on and discuss the sins and failures of others. This is a way of getting our own righteousness from their unrighteousness—the clever game of a deceived heart. What is so tragic about this is, we fail to see that we are in direct competition with Christ who *is* our righteousness. We show that we have a very small Christ. No wonder we have so little joy and power! (Gal. 4:15) To grow as Christians, we must listen to what the Cross of Christ says about us. Taking long, frequent looks at Golgotha will gentle us as the real truth about us wears down that hard edge of our hypersensitivity to criticism.

(c) Antinomianism and Perfectionism: Strange Bedfellows One of the giants of the Great Awakening (began ca. 1725) was John Wesley (1703–1791). The positive effects of his ministry on the church and the people of England, and on the church and the citizens of the newly forming American colonies were incalculable. Thousands of saints will join us around the Throne—the fruits of his Gospel labors. Wesley understood the

doctrine of free justification, and when he began to preach it in the state-controlled churches in England, he was repeatedly expelled—by the host ministers! On May 14, 1738, exasperated after being ousted from a yet another pulpit, he wrote:

Religious people have. . . a quantity of righteousness, acquired by much painful exercise, and formed at last into current habits; this is their wealth, both for this world and the next. . . . But the doctrine of faith is a downright robber. It takes away all this wealth, and only tells us it is deposited for us with somebody else, upon whose bounty we must live like mere beggars. . . (Wesley 1996, 117).

But no man is without his faults. Wesley popularized an erroneous two-stage view of sanctification that we need to be mention. Far from being an antinomian, he wrote vigorously against it (see: *Works*, Vol XI, XV, XVI, pp. 315ff "A Dialogue Between an Antinomian and His Friend," in 2 parts). But he taught a two-stage view of sanctification, the higher stage being "Entire Sanctification" which one can rise to by abstaining from all conscious and willful acts against God's revealed will. Wesley never claimed to be perfectly sanctified, but he did name people who were ¹ (1996, 4:155). This two-stage view of sanctification continues to plague the church today—as we shall see.

If there is one thing the author desires, it is to encourage the teaching of grace, so we recommend *Grace Awakening!* by Chuck Swindoll—with one caveat. It appears to us that in his exuberance to emphasize the believer's emancipation from the curse of the law, he has adopted something like a Wesleyan two-stage view of sanctification. Swindoll writes:

Are you ready for a maverick thought? Once we truly grasp the freedom grace brings, we can spend lengthy periods of our lives without sinning or feeling ashamed. Yes we can! And why not? Why should sin gain the mastery over us? Who says we cannot

¹ *Frt. 9*, [1778] — I returned to London, and *Sunday*, buried the remains of Eleanor Lee. I believe she received the great promise of God, entire sanctification, fifteen or sixteen years ago, and that she never lost it for an hour. I conversed intimately with her ever since, and never saw her do any action, little or great, nor heard her speak any word, which I could reprove. Thou wast indeed "a mother in Israel!" Note: Wesley based "entire sanctification" on *outward* behavior only. "Man looks on the outward appearance, but God looks on the heart" (1 Sam. 16:7). There is no value, but great danger, in setting up arbitrary "stages" of sanctification. The title "Entirely Sanctified" could become grounds for pride, and *in itself*, sin-enducing.

help but yield to it? How unbiblical! You see, most of us are so programmed to sin that we wait for it to happen.

To tell the truth, most Christians have been better trained to expect and handle their sin than to expect and enjoy their freedom (Swindoll 1990, 109).

We need to beware of any view of sin which caters to our fleshly desire to reach some higher plateau of holiness where we do not need to be quite so dependent on the constant intercession of Christ for acceptance with God. Swindoll has inadvertently fallen into that trap by suggesting that we can “spend lengthy periods of our lives without sinning or feeling guilty.” Such teaching goes against the Biblical definitions of sin and the law—sin being a failure to love God perfectly and love our neighbor as ourselves—including not only acts of omission and commission, but unloving attitudes as well. It is impossible to imagine the author of Romans 7 writing such a thing. This is dangerous teaching which, if embraced, will threaten the believer’s integrity by leading him into a false sense of holiness.

(2) The Behavior of Christian Legalism: Loving Law Much and People Little

Legalism is a “the great escape” from love, and a boon to the lazy Christian. He can spend his days majoring on rules (the ones he *can* keep), without having to love anybody. If love “is the fulfillment of the law,” then legalism is its great antithesis.

In *SONSHIP for Africa* we have a small-group exercise called, “The Sin-Killing Workshop” [See Part I, APPENDIX E]. It is an exercise to show “the sinfulness of sin”—that all sin is a violation of the law of love. We divide the class into small groups, and have each group select an external sinful behavior from a list: outbursts of anger, gossip, adultery, drunkenness, tribalism, wife-beating and stealing. On a worksheet, the groups analyze the internal and external motivations for each of the sins, and define the “payoff” for each. Then, we ask which of the Ten Commandments each of the sins directly violates—as a bare law. Interestingly, only two of the sins are *direct* violations of the Decalogue—a key indicator of the attractiveness of legalism. We can “keep the law” and all the while be

hot-tempered, gossiping, alcohol-abusing, child-beating, bigoted wife-abusers. How convenient! This shows what a sham preoccupation with the moral law can be. We can be scrupulous in our "obedience" while virtually every person that has to rub up against us feels neglected, unloved, despised, or even hated.

How can I know if I am a legalist? I am a legalist if the law has taken on a "life of its own" in my heart. I am a legalist if the law rules me apart from a *conscious* relationship with God as my Father, Christ as my Savior and High Priest, and the Holy Spirit as the author of my assurance and "town crier" of my heart. I am a legalist if I think about the law all the time, and on the basis of my obedience to it, accuse or excuse myself before God. For example:

I am pleased with myself because I went to church Sunday morning. I made sure others noticed that I put something in the offering plate. If it was large, I did my best to show its largeness; if it was small, I tried to hide its smallness. In any case, I thought about *it*, not the One you I have been giving it to.

I watched the football game or soap opera rerun on Sunday afternoon, barked at my spouse and children like a dog the whole day and had my mind on anything and everything *but* God, but, remember: I *did* go to church—and, what about that generous offering? Yes, I "kept the Sabbath Day holy."

But legalism can be more insidious:

I made sure that my large offering was not seen by anyone, and congratulated myself for "*not letting my right hand know what my left hand was doing.*"

I successfully read the Bible all Sunday afternoon and on into the evening, trying desperately to keep my thoughts focused on the word—so that I could "keep the Sabbath holy" and therefore "be holy" and please God.

I rise at six each morning to pray and read my Bible, and my family and everyone else I know *knows* that I do. I make sure of it.

Herein lies the seduction of legalism. It is a mistress that draws your heart away from Christ. The law is what you think about; the law is what you look at. Your assurance comes from obeying the law, and trying to assure your conscience that you *have* obeyed it. Or, you lack assurance, and feel condemned by the law because you have *not* obeyed it. You

don't repent very much, because you think of the law as a set of external commandments that you can and must endeavor to keep. Rather than focusing on Christ and his free justification; rather than asking for the power of the Spirit to give you his fruit which *is* love, you try to "keep commandments." You forget that love *is* the fulfillment of the law, and your penchant for lawkeeping forces your eyes off Christ and drives him out of your heart.

(3) The Cure for Christian Legalism: The Gospel

What is the cure for our legalism? Not an abandonment of the law, surely, but learning the way of the Gospel so that we keep it—truly keep it. Legalism gave us Christ—for justification—and then withdrew him, and pointed to the law for sanctification. That is why we have a noisy conscience that we keep trying to silence by our lawkeeping or our exertions in ministry. Our "assurance" is an intellectual exercise based on theological propositions that are true, but that have no power because we do not surrender our consciences fully to the righteousness Jesus has earned for us.

If we are to be delivered from the seduction of the law with its false promises of self-sanctification, we must return to Christ and live *daily and consciously* in our free justification as the basis on which we relate to God and others. We must be weaned from the infellectual milk of the law so that, like the freedmen we are, we can learn to wrestle with our sin in the new way of the Spirit. We are not speaking about learning more, but *leaning* more; not trying, but *trusting*. Nothing else can deliver us from our neurotic preoccupation with obedience to the law as commandments, to being right and looking good.

But whatever was to my profit I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith (Phil. 3:7–9).

B. The Marrow Controversy in the Church of Scotland, 1720

History is whispering warnings—if we will only listen

That good works are the necessary substance of *sanctification* is undebatable. But what about “sanctifying works” as requirements for salvation itself? Luther warned that such talk was “dark and dangerous language” (Berkouwer 1952, 33). Dark and dangerous it is, too, for the testimony of history is that when the means of sanctification is confused, inevitably confusion arises about the means of justification. This kind of toxic talk appears in the New Testament in the context of the first century Galatian conflict. Yes, the error was put down then, but later, it strangled the life out of the medieval church. Has post-Reformation Protestantism managed to put this error to rest? Not at all. It reared its ugly head in the mid-eighteenth century in one of the most significant doctrinal battles ever fought in the Presbyterian Church in Scotland—The Marrow Controversy. “A legalistic strain in Scottish theology” had crippled the church control by “the dead hand of the Moderates” (NDT 1988, 108; Renwick 1966, 170). Only a brave handful of ministers stood to defend the purity of the Gospel of grace. Dallimore’s biography of George Whitefield paints this grim picture:

Lip service continued to be paid to *The Westminster Confession of Faith*, but spiritual life was cold. The Calvinism that had been so meaningful to Reformers and Covenanters degenerated into little more than a form of fatalism. . . and evangelistic zeal withered away (Dallimore 1979, 2:83).

When a heated debate arose in the Scottish General Assembly about the role of repentance in conversion, Thomas Boston recommended the reading of a little book he had only recently come upon, *The Marrow of Modern Divinity*. He reported that this book, penned in 1645 by Edward Fisher, had helped him to better understand and preach the doctrines of grace. “The Marrow” as it came to be called was a rather humble, populist treatise designed

to guide believers on what was known in that day as “the middle road” between legalism and antinomianism. Set in the form of a debate, it is filled with quotes from Luther, Calvin and others.⁴ Pastor James Hog of Carnock found the book helpful, and so that copies would be available to members of the Assembly, he had it reprinted in 1718 (NDT, 108). When the presbyters began to read it, the controversy was ignited. After the initial (verbal) charges of “antinomian” and “universalist” were heard, the battle devolved into one of those classic 18th-century pamphlet wars. Soon after, formal charges were brought against *The Marrow* and its supporters who were labeled “Marrowmen” (ERF 1991, 236).

The main points of contention were: the free offer of the Gospel to all—which the Marrowmen affirmed, and, whether or not good works could be demanded *for salvation*—which the Marrowmen rejected (NIDCC 1978, 635). J. D. Douglas notes that *The Marrow* “proved anathema to the legalism of the Moderates” (1971, 635). What was so offensive about this little book? For one thing, in the minds of the legalists, its emphasis on *faith* seemed to threaten the worth of the law *as law*. They had exalted the law to the point that it had a life of its own, but the Marrowmen refused to talk about the law apart from their relationship to Christ. One of the passages that throws this issue into focus has the hero, “Evangelist,” instructing the new Christian “Neophitus” about the role of faith in his sanctification. Evangelist has told him that “faith enables a man to exercise his Christian graces and perform his Christian duties aright” (Fisher 1837, 187).

⁴ J. D. Douglas expresses doubt about the Marrow’s author being the Edward Fisher who was educated at Oxford (the author signed the work simply, “E. F.”) However, it is written in a popular literary genre of the mid-17th century, that of a dialogue between imaginary characters, in this case, Nomisata (a legalist) Evangelist, and Neophitus (a new Christian). Volume II of *The Marrow* (which did not figure in the controversy) substitutes Nomologista, “a prattler about the law” (ref. 1 Tim. 1:1ff) for Nomista. Although the style is decidedly “simple,” it is not for theological neophytes. Its arguments are of such depth, complexity and length that modern readers are hard pressed to follow them. The 1726 edition of *The Marrow of Modern Divinity in Two Parts with Notes by Thomas Boston* was reprinted in 1991 in a numbered collectors edition of 1,100 copies by Still Waters Revival Books 12810-126 St. Edmonton, BA Canada, T5J 0Y1.

Evangelist: . . . Doth not the Apostle say to the believing Colossians, "As ye have received Jesus Christ as Lord, so walk in him," Col. ii.6; that is, as ye have received him by faith, so go on in your faith, and by his power walk in his commandments. So that good works. . . may rather be called a believer's walking in the way of eternal happiness, than the way itself. But . . . this we may assuredly conclude, that the sum and substance both of the way and walking in the way consists in the receiving of Jesus Christ by faith, and in yielding obedience to his law, according to that measure of receiving. (Fisher 1837, 186–87)

The opponents of the Marrowmen, led by Principal James Hadow of St. Mary's College, St. Andrews, wanted faith left out of the matter of law, and demanded that answers be submitted to twelve doctrinal errors the book supposedly taught. The minority, men of the caliber of Thomas Boston, James Hog of Carnock, and Ebenezer Erskine. (1837, 325–350) produced their answers, and presented them to the 1722 General Assembly. Also at issue was the right to preach the Gospel as a "free offer" to all men—which the Moderates forbade), and the demand that ministers agree to preach the necessity of evidential good works of repentance for *salvation*—which the Moderates demanded (ERF 1991, 237). In their reply, the Marrowmen set forth no less than fourteen points on the necessity of good works, but concluded with a refusal to take the next step—that good works (as judged by men) are necessary to salvation. Here is the end of their reply on this point:

Though we firmly believe holiness necessary upon all these [14] and more accounts, and that the Christian ought to live in the continued exercise of Gospel repentance, which is one main constituent of Gospel holiness, yet we dare not say a holy life is necessary in order to the obtaining of eternal happiness, for. . . we cannot look upon them as wholesome words, since they have the appearance of evil, being such a way of expression as Protestant churches and divines, knowing the strong natural bias in all men towards the seeking salvation, not by faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, but by works of righteousness done by themselves. They [all Protestants] choosing rather to call holiness and good works necessary duties of the persons justified and saved than conditions of salvation; consequents and effects of salvation already obtained, or antecedents. . . than any sort of causes, or proper means of obtaining the possession of salvation; which last honour, the Scripture, for the high praise and glory of sovereign grace, seems to have reserved peculiarly unto faith; and rather to say that holiness is necessary in them that

shall be saved, than necessary to salvation, that we are saved not *by* good works, but rather to them as fruits and effects of saving grace. . . (1837, 336–37).

Principal Hadow was not satisfied, and led the move to have the book banned. The motion was passed and the little band of ministers (which numbered only twelve) were censored and commanded to warn their people against the book. The Moderates had required the performance of evidential prior to salvation. "*In retrospect, we can say that Hadow and those who supported him were guilty of a legalistic perversion of covenant theology. . . .*" since they "*restricted the gospel offer in a mistaken belief that a universal offer required as its basis a universal redemption*" (NDT 1988, 109). Boston, Erskine and the others saw covenant theology as a theology of grace. Both sides claimed that they conformed to the *Westminster Confession*, but one wonders how Hadow could have declared *The Marrow* to be anti-confessional. The 1645 edition of the book (printed just 25 years earlier) had appeared with a preface dated May 1, 1645 by Joseph Caryl, the official appointee of the newly convened Westminster Assembly (1643). Caryl's duty was to "revise and approve theological works for the press." Not only had he not mandated revisions to Part I of the book, he had wholeheartedly endorsed it. When Part Two appeared, he wrote the preface for the combined edition on September 6, 1648 (NDT 1988, 109; Fisher 1837, page v).

In the end, the doctrine of the Marrowmen became the doctrine of the Associate Presbytery of secessionist churches (ERF 1991, 236) led by Ebenezer Erskine and Thomas Boston. Boston, author of the widely acclaimed *Human Nature in its Fourfold State* (1720), in defiance of the Assembly's ban, republished *The Marrow* in 1726 with his own commentary and Appendices which give the details of the controversy (see his *Works*, vol. 7).

Arthur Fawcett in his book, *The Cambuslang Revival*, describes a revival that began in 1741 with the Rev. William McColloch of the small Scottish hamlet of Cambuslang on the south of Glasgow. Before McColloch's heart had been renewed and he began preaching the Gospel with new earnestness, he had been known by the nickname, "Ale-minister."

No, McColloch was not fond of ale—it was his parishioners. His sermons were so boring that at the point in the church service when he got up to preach, “many of the audience left to quench their thirst in the public house” (Fawcett 1971, 39). Then, when the pastor was set on fire by the Gospel, people began to come to Christ by the score. In 1742, he sent a written invitation to George Whitefield to come to Cambuslang to preach. Whitefield arrived in July of that year, and the response was beyond anything Scotland had ever seen. Vast crowds gathered in a natural outdoor amphitheatre now called “The Preaching Braes of Cambuslang.” Dallimore quotes Whitefield: “On [the] Sabbath day, upwards of twenty thousand people” gathered as “the holy sacrament was administered in the fields!” (1979, 2:125–26). A. M. Renwick mentions *40,000* at one meeting! (1966, 170)

From our vantage point it is clear that the honest hearts of these few men were being criticized as much as their doctrine. They “saw an attack on Evangelical truth” and responded as they should have—by pressing the issues of free grace home until they prevailed (NIDCC 1978, 635). They refused to present themselves as men who merited the label “saved” on the basis of their works, or to think of themselves as righteous based on their own works. Part Two of *The Marrow* is an exposition of the Ten Commandments, and one of the most profound treatises on the spiritual nature of the law ever penned. It shows that obedience to God must be measured by observable love to God and our neighbor—not by mere outward compliance to external ordinances.

The Marrowmen preached the Gospel with such power and warmth that people flocked to hear them. Erskine’s preaching “was such that regular adjournment to the open air became necessary when the church could not contain the congregation” (NIDCC 1978, 351)—not surprising given his warm declaration of the love of God to men, women, and children in the free offer of the Gospel. In the revival that ensued, the controversy died away, but the fact that it occurred at all is a testimony to the legalizing tendency of the human heart and the seductive power of the law. The frightening thing is that we Christians

are so enamored with the idea of righteousness by law that we keep calling this deadly plague of legalism down on ourselves. We insist in exalting the law to a position over our consciences, and there it sits, reigning over us, obscuring Christ and his righteousness by constantly accusing or comforting us based on our performance.

Thomas Boston's preface to his 1726 edition of *The Marrow* includes this excerpt from "the Memoirs of Mr. Halyburton's Life" (p. 199):

I dread mightily that a rational sort of religion is coming in among us: I mean by it, a religion that consists in a bare attendance on outward duties and ordinances, without the power of godliness: and thence people shall fall into a way of serving God, which is a mere deism, having no relation to Jesus Christ and the Spirit of God. (Fisher 1837, xii).

A century later, another great Presbyterian, Archibald Alexander (the man Charles Hodge named his son A. A. for ⁵) noted the same dangerous tendency in his day. Alexander, a one-time moderator of the Presbyterian General Assembly, was the first professor appointed to Princeton Theological Seminary when it opened in 1812 (NIDCC 1991, 25). In his work, *Thoughts on Religious Experience*, he identifies the content of sanctifying faith, calling it "the doctrine of free grace" in one place, "the doctrine of Christ" in another. He also mentions another possible object of faith for sanctification, one which stands in stark contrast to the Gospel—"human merit."

It is by faith that the spiritual life is made to grow; and the doctrine of free grace, without any mixture of human merit, is the only true object of faith. Christians [notice he is speaking of sanctification here, not justification] are too much inclined to depend on themselves, and not to derive their life *entirely from Christ*. There is a spurious legal religion, which may flourish without the practical belief in the absolute freeness of

⁵ We can see Alexander's influence in A. A. Hodge's theology as he precisely defines the role of faith in sanctification with the same precision of his namesake—and in so doing, at least in this one point, outshines his own father, Charles. Compare: Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, 1981. Part III, Ch. XVIII "Sanctification," para. 3. "The Method of Sanctification, and, A. A. Hodge, *Outlines of Theology*, 1972. Chapter XXXV, "Sanctification," Q. 12 "What office do the Scriptures ascribe to faith in sanctification?"

divine grace, but it possesses none of the characteristics of the Christian's life. . . (Alexander 1967, 165).

Clearly, legalism is like a "magnetic north" that constantly pulls our flesh in its direction—away from God and away from grace. And, when our view of the Christian life is "legal," unconsciously, insidiously, our reliance on our free justification is eroded—something we will see later in a study of the Galatian controversy.

Sonship teaching in its various forms around the world stands in the same theological tradition as the *Marrow of Modern Divinity*. *Sonship* also tends to ignite the same sort of controversy *and* result in the same sort of evangelism and church renewal—evidenced by a joyful and loving obedience to the moral law of God! As long as the human heart loves law too much, the message of *The Marrow* will be forever modern, and a breath of fresh air to troubled souls pressed down by the relentless demands of the law. In Africa, to be sure, its strong word of grace is the need of the hour.

It is mandatory that we stand together as bondslaves of Jesus Christ under his gracious law. And, it is critical that we stand in such a way that we maintain the freedom with which Christ has made us free. Let us stand, then, in Christ and with Christ. Let us stand against our flesh, and against the pernicious error of legalism. Let us embrace the doctrine, and, if we are willing, assume the name of *Marrowmen*.⁶

It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery (Gal. 5:1).

The law as God's standard still remains valid, but the coming of Christ has affected the function of the law in the Christian life" (Guthrie 1981, 700).

* What shall our sisters call themselves? The original loses its masculine ring with this suggestion, but if they will, let them be the *Marrowwomen*!

CHAPTER 5

THE OBEDIENCE OF FAITH

The Relationship of Faith and the Spirit for Sanctification: Part 1

Through him [Christ] and for his name's sake, we received grace and apostleship to call people from among all the Gentiles to the obedience that comes from faith.

– Romans 1:5

I [Jesus] am sending you to them to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me."

– Acts 26:17b–18

Introduction

From the beginning we have insisted that faith and the Holy Spirit are the primary operators in sanctification, but we have not yet developed this into a clear theology of *means*. That is our task now, but first, a rapid review: [1] In chapter one, we defined justification and sanctification, noted that free justification is the ground of our sanctification, and, moving from head to heart, considered the affective impact of both doctrines. [2] In chapter two we discovered "the sanctification gap"—a common fault in the discipline of practical theology that fails to connect what we *ought* to do with *how* we may be enabled to do it. We quoted from the writings of six authors whose basic approach to growth is exhorting believers to endeavor to obey the God's law. [3] The third and fourth chapters were occupied with the subject of the moral law. Chapter three was a review of the "three uses" of the moral law: as a revealer of sin, as a tutor to lead us to Christ, and as a rule of life. We noted the proper and improper uses of each. [4] In the last chapter we examined the New Testament teaching that only love can fulfill the law.

Now we have arrived at the heart of the matter—the *means* of sanctification. What are the “spiritual mechanics” involved in the process of sanctification? We know that the Spirit and faith are involved in our growth, but what is the Biblical relationship between these two great forces—one God’s, the other ours? How should they operate in concert so that we are transformed into the likeness of Christ? This much is certain: law takes the outside-in approach; we need to be changed from the inside out. The Spirit has written the law on our hearts, so we *know* what we should be. Our problem is not knowledge, but power, not mind, but will. Where can we get the power for change?

Our Thesis: Faith in Christ Sanctifies

The Puritan John Flavel observed: “*All other graces like birds in the nest depend upon what faith brings to them*” (Thomas 1996). We agree, but, not all do. We have set forth two contrasting views about where the power for change comes from. Both speak about the law, faith, and the Spirit, but they do not agree as to: [1] their respective roles, [2] their relative power to effect sanctification, or [3] how they are dynamically related to one another in the process of spiritual growth. Each of our six antagonists has set forth a theology of sanctification. They all *sound* Biblical because they use the right words, but they all share a glaring flaw: none gives faith its proper place. Their way to holiness is trying; the Gospel’s way is believing.

Faith in Christ → The Holy Spirit → The Obedience of Faith Working by Love

We advocate the order above. Our antagonists teach its opposite below.

Focus on Duties → Human Effort → Outward Obedience to the Law as Law

Previously we asked ourselves, “What is the one thing we should do more of, to grow in holiness?” We submit that the answer is, “believe more.” What we usually think of as “the means of sanctification” (Bible reading, church attendance, the sacraments, etc.) are merely

the outward means of it—good and lovely things, but ineffectual apart from the internal operation of faith. Our thesis, therefore, is: the inward means of sanctification is faith. Our argument is as follows:

Premise: Faith in Christ produces sanctification. (Acts 26:17, 18; Rom. 1:5; Gal. 3:1-5)

First: Sanctification is obedience to the law of God. (1 Cor. 7:19)

Second: The law of God is fulfilled by love. (Matt. 22:37ff; Rom. 13:8ff; Gal. 5:6; 2 Jn. 6)

Third: Love comes not by law, but by the Spirit. (Rom. 8:3, 4; Gal. 5:22)

Fourth: The Spirit comes through faith in Christ. (Gal. 3:5)

Fifth: Faith in Christ produces the likeness of Christ. (Jn. 15:3-5; II Cor. 3:16-18)

Sixth: The likeness of Christ is sanctification. (II Cor. 3:16-18; Gal. 5:22, 23)

Conclusion: Sanctification is by faith in Christ. (Acts 26:17, 18; Rom. 1:5; Gal. 3:1-5)

Notice that this is not a simplistic argument from linear causality, but a description of the systemic nature of sanctification as it occurs in the context of our union with Christ. This is holistic Hebrew thought, not syllogistic Aristotelian logic—a whirlpool, not a railway. There is no daunting seven-step process to memorize and mechanically repeat. Sanctification is simple enough for a child to understand: *looking at Jesus changes us*. We have not yet described much of what holy persons *do*, only how they come to be that way, i.e., obedient, loving, joyful, peaceful, etc. We will move on to praxis when we have comprehended process.

A. Faith: Its Power to Change and Control Behavior Illustrated

1. Even Pagans Understand the Power of Faith

It is interesting that we New Covenant Christians have become the great underestimators of the power of faith to change behavior. Faith in *anything* is powerful. Think about it: What is “sanctification” for a Hindu? It is, not killing rats and eating cows. One could say that Hindus have “a law” against killing rats and eating cows, but the real reason Hindus don’t kill rats or eat cows has nothing to do with law; it has to do with faith. Hindus *believe*

that rats and cows are incarnations of souls—beings like themselves, but at a lower “stage of being” than themselves. Souls, they believe, go through successive reincarnations and progress or regress in the hierarchy of being according to the *karma* (merit) they earn. *Nirvana*, nothingness, “absorption into the world soul” is the goal. Killing a rat or cow, therefore, prematurely terminates its life, and with it, the opportunity to earn *karma* and a better reincarnation. There is no compartmentalization of faith and life; faith, not law, orders life. We could say the same for the World War II Japanese *kamikaze* pilots whose Shinto faith emboldened them to fly their planes into American ships, or the Muslim extremists who strap high-explosives to their bodies and vaporize themselves in Tel Aviv cafés.

In stark contrast to these enthusiasts, we make jokes about “Chicken Sukiyaki, the oldest living *kamikaze* pilot.” Old “Chicken” is an archetype—perhaps of us. Our Indian neighbor, a Sikh from Kashmir, jokes about the Hindu men she sees “sneaking away from their mothers and wives” to eat beef at *Sahara City*, one of our favorite restaurants. Rest assured, there are countless millions of Muslims who would not dream of sacrificing themselves for sake of the *jihad*. There is a reason why some Hindus eat meat and some Shiites shun the call to ultimate sacrifice—their faith is weak. They don’t believe the promises of *nirvana* or the paradise to come—not really. Behavior follows faith. There are, of course, differences between their religions and our faith. Their trust is in myths, but the Object of our faith is the Eternal Christ, the Way, the Truth and the Life. What’s more, our motivation (hopefully) is love for God, a passion for his glory, and a desire to be forever with Christ—not the sort of carnal rewards promised in the Islamic scriptures:

All these comforts and tranquillity may be ours. The gardens, the springs, fruits of every kind, chaste maidens whom no man or jinn [spirit] has touched before shall be at our disposal. Still there shall be more for the companions of paradise. “They will recline on carpets whose inner linings will be Of rich brocade: the Fruit of the Gardens will be near” (*Jihad* 1994, 2; Holy Qur’an S.55:54).

2. "The Faith Chapter" – Hebrews 11

The power of faith was not lost on the writer to the Hebrews. He defines faith as "being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see" (11:1). The bedrock of our faith, he says, is our understanding that God created all things, from nothing (*ex-nihilo*) by the word of his power (11:3). Then he goes on to say that the saints of old were commended for their *faith*, for "without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him" (11:6). Following this is an impressive catalogue of heroic exploits and terrible sufferings of the saints. The point the writer wants to make is that it was their faith in the God of creation and redemption that gave them their passion. Notice that as each player in the drama moves across the stage, what motivates them to obedience is not that God has required or commanded something of them, but their strong faith in, respect for and personal relationship to him. This God was to be trusted—no matter the cost.

By faith Noah, when warned about things not yet seen, in holy fear built an ark to save his family. By his faith he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness that comes by faith. . . .

By faith Abraham, even though he was past age—and Sarah herself was barren—was enabled to become a father because he considered him faithful who had made the promise. And so from this one man, and he as good as dead, came descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as countless as the sand on the seashore. . . .

By faith Abraham, when God tested him, offered Isaac as a sacrifice. He who had received the promises was about to sacrifice his one and only son, even though God had said to him, "It is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned." Abraham reasoned that God could raise the dead, and figuratively speaking, he did receive Isaac back from death. . . .

And what more shall I say? I do not have time to tell about Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, Samuel and the prophets, who through faith conquered kingdoms, administered justice, and gained what was promised; who shut the mouths of lions, quenched the fury of the flames, and escaped the edge of the sword; whose weakness was turned to strength; and who became powerful in battle and routed foreign armies. Women received back their dead, raised to life again. Others were tortured and refused to be released, so that they might gain a better resurrection. Some faced jeers and flogging, while still others were chained and put in prison. They were stoned; they were sawed in two; they were put to death by the sword. They went about in sheepskins and

goatskins, destitute, persecuted and mistreated—the world was not worthy of them. They wandered in deserts and mountains, and in caves and holes in the ground.

These were all commended for their faith, yet none of them received what had been promised. God had planned something better for us so that only together with us would they be made perfect” [namely, the Gospel] (Heb. 11:1–2, 6–7, 11–12, 17–19, 32–40).

That is an astounding testimony to the power of faith to motivate and to produce fruit! But there is another reason the writer feeds his disheartened readers with this information. He wants them to share his “vision”—that as they suffer, they are “surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses!” (12:1a) *Look at them*, he is saying, and “throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles us! Let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us!” (12:1b). There it is—a call to holiness based on faith. Notice the object of that faith: “Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross [accomplished redemption], scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God [ongoing intercession, cf. 7:25].

But we Christians! We seem to be afflicted by a *faith sickness* whose infecting agent is unbelief and chief symptom is powerlessness. We have persistent difficulties believing that faith in Christ can really change us—deeply change us. So, we create Christ-substitutes and put our faith in them to change us: the law, rules, duty, “oughts” and “shoulds.” And, when these contrivances fail, rather than critically evaluating our theology of sanctification, we multiply rules in the hope of increasing godliness. Here in Africa, we have come to define the Christian life almost solely in terms of requirements and prohibitions. There are rules everywhere for everything. They fill up our minds and we lose our sense of need for Christ and the Spirit. We have our rules; we are keeping them; we are holy. But, if real growth in godliness is what we seek, we must return to God’s method of growing holy—faith.

If we want to encourage holiness, godliness, and Christlikeness in Christians, then we must look to the Gospel. When we begin discipling God’s people by building their faith in the lavish, unconditional love of Christ for them, they will gladly obey—from the heart!

They will be eager to be refreshed in worship, hungry for the Scriptures, have a love of prayer, and a burden for the lost—all driven by a love for the lover of their souls! What motivates us, what changes us is not law, not the preaching of the law, not making promises to “turn over a new leaf” and “have a consistent ‘Quite Time.’” The theology of obligation is deadening. A man is motivated by what he believes in and serves what he loves. Stir up a man’s faith and love for God and his obedience will follow.

B. The Nature and Efficacy of Sanctifying Faith

1. Justifying Faith and Sanctifying Faith: One Kind of Faith , or Two?

We have divided faith into “justifying” and “sanctifying” faith for purely utilitarian reasons, for they are precisely the same in their action (trust), their content (Christ and his merits) and continuous exercise. They differ only in their *effect*: one is legal (faith for justification), and the other is moral (faith for sanctification). In chapter one, we noted that the first time we exercised faith in Jesus Christ as our sin-bearer, we were declared righteous (justified) in God’s courtroom. Justification never needs to be repeated because its *judicial effect* is eternal (Rom. 8:1; 28-39). But our “justifying faith” in Christ does continue, and becomes “sanctifying faith,” that is, it is the basis for and instrumental means of our moral transformation into the likeness of Christ. The process of spiritual growth is not automatic; it is carried on by faith. Our faith does not merit sanctification any more than it does justification. Faith is the activity of the soul that unites us to Christ from whom our new life flows by the indwelling operation of the Holy Spirit (Berkhof 1941, 537; Gal. 3: 1-5). Ongoing faith, then, is not an optional activity in the Christian life—some nice add-on to help our transformation proceed at a faster pace. *Faith is the instrumental means of it.*

G. C. Berkouwer agrees with Luther that Sola-fide [faith alone] “is as much at the heart of sanctification as it is of justification” and that we must not stray away from the principle of faith when we move from salvation to growth (1952, 33). He says:

We must be thoroughly aware that in shifting from justification to sanctification we are not withdrawing from the sphere of faith. It is not as if we should proceed from a faith in justification to the realities of sanctification; for we might as truly speak of the reality of justification and our faith in sanctification. Indeed, nearly all of the problems of sanctification are bound up with the question of this “transition” from justification to sanctification. . . . If it be true that a wedge has been driven between them, the church is certainly in mortal danger of slipping into moralism, with its attendant self-conscious pride [Pharisaism] or its nagging uncertainties [lack of assurance]. *The moment sanctification is ejected from the temple of faith. . . that moment justification by faith has become an initial stage on the pilgrim's journey, a supply-station which later becomes a pleasant memory. Successive stages would follow, that of sanctification for instance, and in this stage it would be up to man to act* (Berkouwer 1952, 112–13, emphasis mine).

Previously, we noted the danger of confusing the outward and inward means of sanctification. Berkouwer has just stated the same problem differently, by warning us that sanctification cannot take place apart from faith, which we have identified as “the inward means.” He sees that moralism (defining holiness as the mere keeping of laws) will be the inevitable result if we disassociate faith from the process of sanctification. Returning to our linear equation will illustrate this danger:

Focus on Duties → Human Effort → Outward Obedience to the Law as Law

Berkouwer has put his finger on the source of the powerlessness that haunts our Christian lives. We assume that faith is for justification, for the day of conversion, and that afterward, we must get down to “the real business” of the Christian life—trying hard to be obedient, striving to be effective disciples. And? Our justification becomes “a pleasant memory.” When we preach the obligations of the Christian life without continually clarifying that they can only be fulfilled in the context of looking in faith to Christ and the Spirit, we are setting ourselves and others up for disillusionment. [see Part I, APPENDIX F, “*How to Be Changed and Lead Others to Change*,” from *SONSHIP for Africa*]

Richard Lovelace, in his *Renewal as a Way of Life*, confirms Berkouwer’s position on the necessity of ongoing faith for sanctification. He says:

Sanctification, like justification, is primarily a matter of faith... We cannot conquer sin by effort and will power alone, but only by an active faith, depending on the free gift of deliverance through the Messianic atonement. Behavior changed by will power alone, without faith or the operation of the Holy Spirit, simply transmutes sin into another form: moral pride and self-righteousness. And the most serious forms of sin cannot be touched by will power, because they are spiritual states below the surface of our actions (Love-lace 1985, 145).

2. Clarifying Faith as the Instrumental Means of Sanctification

We would do well to remind ourselves of Robert Shaw's analysis of causality in sanctification in his (1845) exposition of the *Westminster Confession of Faith*:

The *impulsive* or moving cause of sanctification is the free grace of God.

The *meritorious* cause is the blood and righteousness of Christ.

The *efficient* cause is the Holy Spirit.

The *instrumental* cause is faith in Christ.

The *external means* are: 1. the Word read and preached, the sacraments, and prayer. [In addition] 2. Providences, especially afflictive dispensations, are also blessed for promoting the sanctification of believers. (Shaw 1974, 144, proof texts omitted).

The first two "causes" Shaw mentioned illustrate that the *ground* of our sanctification is our free justification. The last three concern us here. His use of the term "instrumental" is instructive. An instrument is a tool used to accomplish work. One can have two boards, a nail, and the *will* to join the two, but a hammer is needed. If we think of the joining of the boards as the objective (sanctification), and the will to join them as the Spirit's impulse, the instrument for joining them, the hammer, is faith. An attempt to do the work by some other means—with one's hand for instance—would be followed by failure and accompanied by great pain. Trying to sanctify ourselves or others by rigors—trying to keep the law, trying to be faithful in the use of the external means, or trying to be like Christ, produces busyness but not holiness. P. T. Forsyth noted that men work hard at imitating Christ rather than trusting him ("and make poor copies"). What we need, he said, is his love and grace, "and there is only one way of imitating that. . . by trusting him" (1899, 100, 01).

3. Biblical-Sounding vs. Biblically Correct Teaching on Sanctification

The best way for us to sharpen our discernment is to stand the weak alongside the strong.

a) **Vague Thinking Exposed** Thomas Vincent's 1674 commentary on the *Westminster Shorter Catechism* (see chapter 2, p. 45) expounds each of its 107 questions and answers with as many as twenty-four of his own (see chapter 2, p. 45). He follows the catechism's question on sanctification (Q. 35) with this query: "*How is our sanctification carried on?*" This alerts us that he is about to reveal the *means* of spiritual growth. His answer is:

Our sanctification is carried on by degrees, as God doth bless his providences, especially his ordinances, through them to communicate further measures of his Spirit and grace (Vincent 1980, 99).

At first glance, this seems to be an adequate explanation of "how our sanctification is carried on," but upon closer inspection, no explicit role has been assigned to faith. Neither here, nor in his eight follow-up questions does Vincent include one word or phrase that could be construed as being synonymous with faith—even in his brief mention of "mortification" and "vivification." Notice that the means of growth he has listed (God's providences and ordinances) are the very things Shaw identified as the "*external means*" (cf. Vincent 1980, 99; Shaw 1974, 144). To Vincent's credit, he affirmed that God is the author of sanctification. He said rightly: "We cannot cleanse and renew ourselves. . . . we are neither the authors nor efficient causes of our sanctification" (1980, 99). The problem is that in taking such pains to protect divine sovereignty in spiritual growth, he has left nothing for *us* to do. Unlike Shaw, he offered no *instrumental* cause. Sanctification sounds as if it is automatic. Is our role to merely wait for God to use his providences and ordinances "to communicate further measures of his Spirit and grace?" One could argue that Vincent *simply assumes* the operation of faith. Perhaps so, but in teaching sanctification, we must not leave something so vital as our need of daily, conscious union with Christ by faith to the imagination.

William Gurnall, another of the Puritans, called faith "*the radical grace*" (1964, 23). Faith is the fountain of our obedience, as The *Westminster Confession of Faith*, in its chapter "Of Good Works," said:

These good works, done in obedience to God's commandments, are *the fruits and evidences of a true and lively faith*, and by them believers manifest their thankfulness, strengthen their assurance, edify their brethren, adorn the profession of the gospel, stop the mouths of the adversaries, and glorify God, whose workmanship they are, created in Christ Jesus thereunto. . . (*Westminster Standards* n.d., 17, italics mine; Philadelphia Confession of 1742 is verbatim in Ch. XVI:3).

This ability of faith to work was one of the core principles of Paul's Gospel, and, as we have noted, one of the promised blessings of the New Covenant. Ezekiel prophesied that the nations would know of the glory of God's name through the holiness of his people—people with new hearts and his Spirit living in them (36:22). Paul echoes that in Romans 1:5 when he says, ". . . we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith for the sake of his name among all the nations" (1:5, RSV). The King James Version's unfortunate translation of *εἰς ὑπακοήν πιστεως* as "*obedience to the faith*" puts the emphasis on obedience, i.e., "obey the faith." Although that is a grammatically possible rendering, both Charles Hodge and John Murray argue that the preferred reading is "the obedience of faith" (Hodge 1972, 21; Murray, 1959, 13). Interestingly, in Paul's parallel passage in Romans 16:26, the King James translates precisely the same Greek phrase as "*the obedience of faith.*" This puts the emphasis where it belongs—on faith, with obedience as the result. Surely it is significant that Paul begins and ends his greatest theological treatise this way, framing the whole with the message that obedience *to* Christ flows from faith *in* Christ. The NIV renders the phrase best, although it interprets, rather than translates. It reads: "to call people from among all the Gentiles *to the obedience that comes from faith.*" This is almost certainly the correct meaning, and as such, is an exquisite capsule of the Pauline doctrine of sanctification.

A theology of sanctification based on doing instead of believing is the result of our confusion about the internal and external means of sanctification, a confusion that continues to haunt Evangelical and Reformed theology to this day. This is no benign error. The failure to distinguish them has destructive consequences for the Christian life. When we are big doers and small believers, our eyes stray away from Christ and his righteousness, and focus squarely on the *duties*, which are impossible to perform rightly, apart from faith. If we will get busy believing instead of just doing, the doing will come, and it will be of an infinitely higher caliber and purer motive than that which issues from a “try to do right” Christianity. Again, we have much sympathy with those who hold to this doctrine, because for too long we were held in bondage to it, and held others in it. We know the destructive effects it can have on the conscience, and the bitter fruits of it in the life. We have also experienced the kind of joyful and loving obedience that abounds when at last we understand, embrace, and live on the basis of the kind of faith-filled doctrine of sanctification espoused by men like Edward Fisher, Thomas Boston, Ebenezer Erskine, Walter Marshall, R. L. Dabney, A. A. Hodge, Archibald Alexander, C. G. Berkouwer, Herman Ridderbos, Richard Lovelace and others.

b) Biblically Sound Teaching

A. A. Hodge (1823–1886) did a superior job in discerning how the process of spiritual growth takes place. In his commentary on the *Westminster Confession of Faith*, he classified the means of sanctification as “inward” and “outward.” Here, faith plays a critical role.

The *means* of sanctification are of two distinct orders—(a) inward and (b) outward. The *inward* means of sanctification is Faith. Faith is the instrument of our justification. . . and of our communion with God—the organ of our union with Christ and fellowship with his Spirit. Faith, moreover, is that act of the regenerated soul whereby it embraces and experiences the power of the truth, and whereby the inward experiences of the heart and the outward actions of the life are brought into obedience to the truth (Hodge 1996, 195).

Hodge went on to define the *outward* means of sanctification: [1] the truth as revealed in the inspired Scriptures (“Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth.” (John 17: 17, 19). “The truth, as the outward means of sanctification, stands in correlation to faith, the inward means of it.” Three other outward means, also dependent on faith, are mentioned: [2] the sacraments, [3] prayer, and [4] the “the gracious discipline of God’s providence” for which he cited John 15:2, Rom. 5:3,4, and Heb. 12:5–11 (Hodge 1996, 195).

C. The Mighty Christ: The Object of Our Faith

We have a tendency, as Berkouwer noted, to fall into thinking of the faith we exercised for salvation as a thing of the past—some once-for-all rite of passage that brought us into positional justification, positional adoption, and positional sanctification. The truth is, as my colleague Paul Miller is fond of saying, “*Faith is the uranium core that powers the nuclear reactor of the Christian life!*”

Keeping Our Balance When we exalt the place of faith in sanctification, as we have been doing, we have a Biblical balancing act to carry on—to keep the concepts of Christ, faith in Christ, and the power of the Holy Spirit, in proper balance. If we omit, or even slight, one of these elements, we will forfeit a sound, working Biblical theology of growth. In Shaw’s analysis of the process of sanctification, he identified “the blood and righteousness of Christ” as the *meritorious* cause; faith in Christ’s merits as the *instrumental* cause; and the Holy Spirit as the *efficient* cause (1974, 14). Faith never operates in a vacuum. It must have a worthy object (the redemptive *work* of Christ) and operate in the context of a relationship with the *person* of Christ.

What is faith, specifically, Christian faith? Simply put, faith is trust in Christ and his merits. We made a division of sorts, between justifying and sanctifying faith (p. 118) and want to press that further. Justifying faith is the total abandonment of self, self-confidence

and its fruit, self-effort, so that we cast ourselves wholly upon Christ for salvation. Sanctifying faith is the total abandonment of self, self-confidence and its fruit, self-effort, so that we cast ourselves wholly upon Christ for Christlikeness. R. L. Dabney took note that the Scriptures "*describe faith by almost every imaginable active figure. It is a 'looking' (Isa. 65:22), a 'receiving' (Jn. 1:12,13), an 'eating' of Him' (Jn. 6:54), a 'coming' (Jn. 5:40), an 'embracing' (Heb. 11:13), a 'fleeing unto' and 'laying hold of' (Heb. 6:18), etc.*" (1972, 605–06). Dabney made the point that although faith is a noun which would have us think of the *content* of faith, that in its application, faith is an *activity* that has an object: Christ. Faith, even if we speak of it as "resting" or "trusting" is not passive, but active. Faith is a reaching out for, a laying hold of Christ and all his benefits. Isaac Watts in his hymn, "Am I a Soldier of the Cross" brought together the "seeing" and "laying hold of" God's promises—in this case, the promise of victory for the saints at war:

*Thy saint in all this glorious war, shall conquer though they die;
They view the triumph from afar, and seize it with their eye* (Trinity 1990, 573).

That is the character of faith. We *seize Christ with our eye*, this Christ—whom having not seen, we love; in whom, though now we see him not, yet believing, we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory (1 Pet. 1:8 KJV). That is the power of faith—it is powerful because Jesus Christ is the object of it. Faith links weak people to a Mighty Christ. Faith does not require any work *to* work, only trust. Faith in Christ gives us Christ, and our faith gives us all of Christ that we can ever have or need—instantly, on the spot. That being the case, when we talk of "growing in faith" or "having more faith," or "having more of Christ" what we are really saying is that we rely less on ourselves, and more fully on Christ. *That* is growth in faith. Faith is powerful because it is "the hand of the heart" with which we lay hold of a powerful Christ.

The Works of John Owen, a massive sixteen volume set, first published in 1674, includes two full volumes devoted to the person and work of the Holy Spirit (vols. 3 and 4). In volume 3, he discussed the means of the mortification of sin under the heading, "*How the death of Christ is applied to us, or, which is the same, How we apply ourselves to the death of Christ for this purpose*"—underscoring that sanctification is both the Spirit's work and ours. He said that we mortify (kill) sin in ourselves by two means, faith and love. For Owen, the order was: [1] love as the origin; [2] faith as our response to God's loveliness. "*The way we derive virtue from Christ,*" he said, "*is by touching him*" (Owen 1965, 3:362). He then drew an allegory between the diseased woman with the issue of blood who touched the hem of Christ's garment, and our "touching" him by faith to overcome sin. He asked:

But how will this effect it? how will sin be mortified hereby? I say, How, by what power and virtue were they healed in the wilderness who looked unto the brazen serpent? Was it not because that was an ordinance of God, which by his almighty power he made effectual unto that purpose? The death of Christ being so as to the crucifying of sin, when it is looked on or applied unto by faith, shall not divine virtue and power to go forth unto that end? (1965, 3:362)

Owen went on to say that the Scriptures clearly teach that faith in the death of Christ itself has "a peculiar efficacy unto the subduing of sin" because by "beholding" him "as in a glass, we are changed into the same image" (II Cor. 3:18) He said that faith is "looking," and that we will be transformed into the likeness of what we focus on. And, he added, this faith is the "only means whereby we actually derive from Christ the benefits of our union with him." *Faith is the only way.* How else can we receive grace and power from Christ? "So," he said, "we have grace for the killing of sin, and thereby become dead with him, crucified with him, buried with him. . . ." (1965, 3:362).

This is that which we call the application of the death of Christ unto us, or our application of ourselves to the death of Christ for the mortification of sin. And they by whom this means thereof is despised or neglected . . . must live under the power of sin. . . . According as we abide and abound herein will be our success. Those who are careless and remiss in the exercise of faith . . . will find that sin will keep its ground,

and maintain so much power in them as shall issue in their perpetual trouble; and men who are much conversant with the death of Christ—not in notions and lifeless speculations. . . will be implanted into the likeness of it, and experience the death of sin in them continually” (Owen 1965, 362-63).

We will have power over our sins, Owen made clear, when we start looking at Christ. In 1692, nearly twenty-five years later, Thomas Watson published his *Body of Divinity*. In his chapter on sanctification, he asks, “*How may sanctification be attained?*”—our means question. He mentioned the Scriptures as a first means, since they are the mirror to “show us the spots of our soul” and the laver of the Gospel “to wash them away.” Then he said:

Get faith in Christ’s blood. ‘Having purified their hearts by faith.’ Acts xv 9. She in the gospel who touched the hem of Christ’s garment [echoing Owen?] was healed. A touch of faith purifies. Nothing can have a greater force upon the heart, to sanctify it, than faith. If I believe Christ and his merits are mine, how can I sin against him? Justifying faith does that in a spiritual sense which miraculous faith does, it removes mountains, the mountains of pride, lust, envy. Faith and the love of sin are inconsistent (1958, 249).

Both these men have identified that “uranium core” of faith we mentioned before. One reason we have quoted them here, is that they were contemporaries of Thomas Vincent, and both endorsed (along with thirty-eight others) his 1674 edition of *The Shorter Catechism Explained* (see pp. 45, 121). What this shows is not certain. Did they fail to detect Vincent’s woeful lack of emphasis on faith, or did they simply add their names to a list of signatories without a careful scrutiny of his book—especially of the means of sanctification presented in it? Owen signed first; Joseph Caryl second (see our page 108). The moral is, be careful what books you recommend. In the world of Christian literature, it would be difficult to find a darker, more somber, legal-sounding volume for use with children than Vincent’s. Perhaps it was a “normal” tone for their day—and a chief reason *The Marrow of Modern Divinity* was so well received, circulated so rapidly, and had such a renewing effect on the church. Expounding the Biblical means of sanctification clearly when it cannot be escaped in a text, and having it in one’s heart as a working principle for the Christian life, do not necessarily go hand-in-hand.

In that same vein, the late Dr. C. John Milner, professor of Practical Theology at Westminster Seminary in Philadelphia, USA, remarked that in 1647, after the Westminster Assembly had adjourned, the Scottish commissioners (eleven in all) arrived back home, scratched their heads and said to themselves, "*Wait a minute; we've left something out! How does this all apply?*" As a result, Miller said, barely a year later, they had produced an addendum to the *Westminster Confession*—*The Sum of Saving Knowledge, A Brief Sum of Christian Doctrine, Contained in The Holy Scriptures, And Holden Forth In The Foresaid Confession of Faith and Catechisms; Together with The Practicall Use Thereof*." (Historian J. Edwin Orr, after reading such lengthy titles aloud was known to quip, "*That was the title—not the book.*") *The Sum of Saving Knowledge* is one of the more refreshing and devotional documents to come out of this era of Scottish Presbyterianism. The necessity of obedience is affirmed, and there is a strong emphasis on *faith* as the means of keeping it. A sampling:

So much for the laying other grounds of faith, and warrants to believe. Now, for *the evidencing of true faith by fruits*, these four things are requisite: (1.) That the believer be soundly convinced, in his judgment, of his obligation to keep the whole moral law, all the days of his life; and that not the less, but so much the more, as he is delivered by Christ from the covenant of works, and curse of the law. (2.) That he endeavor to grow in the exercise and daily practice of godliness and righteousness. (3.) *That the course of his new obedience run in the right channel, that is through faith in Christ, and through a good conscience, to all the duties of love towards God and man.* (4.) *That he keep strait communion with the fountain Christ Jesus, from whom grace must run along, for furnishing of good fruits . . .* (*Confession of Faith* 1973, 339, italics mine). [A further excerpt from *The Sum of Saving Knowledge*, "Evidences of True Faith" appears as Part I, APPENDIX G.]

Summing up, in his commentary on Romans, Calvin told us where we can get power over our flesh. He wrote:

Let then the faithful learn to embrace him [Christ], not only for justification, but also for sanctification, as he has been given to us for both these purposes, lest they rend him asunder by their mutilated faith (Calvin 1959, 294).

Next, we consider how our faith, this "looking" at Christ, connects us with the Holy Spirit who is indwelling us, to produce real change in the way we think, feel, and act.

D. The Holy Spirit: The Agent of Our Sanctification

R. L. Dabney observed that God in all three of his persons is the author of sanctification, but that the Holy Spirit is the special agent appointed to oversee our growth.

The proper and immediate Agent is the Holy Ghost. . . Christ is our sanctifier *because* he procures the benefit for us by His justifying righteousness; *because* He is now the God of Providence, and Dispenser of the means to His people; and *because*, by His perpetual intercession, He procures and dispenses the influences of the Holy Ghost to us..." (Dabney 1972, 665, emphasis mine).

Crucial Questions Concerning the Work of the Spirit

Dabney's statement raises a number of questions about the Spirit's work in us. *When* did we initially receive him? *How* did we receive him? *For what purpose* did God initially send him? After we receive him, does he work *in the same way* as under the Old Covenant? Do we need to *keep receiving* him, and if so, how? *For what purposes* do we continually need the Spirit? As we begin the search for those answers, a rapid overview of the Spirit's work from creation--up to and including our sanctification, will be instructive:

The Father and the Son and Holy Spirit, from eternity, [1] set their love on us, and, when they had [2] created the world and the race of men, after we sinned, when we were dead in—not merely ill from—our transgressions and sins, Christ was [3] born of a woman by the agency of the Holy Spirit (Lk. 1:35), [4] lived in the power of the Holy Spirit (Matt. 3:16; 4:1, etc.) and by the power of the Spirit (Heb. 9:14) [5] laid down his life, taking on himself the full wrath of God for our sins (Isa. 53:6; II Cor. 5:21). Then, in order to apply to us the redemption Christ purchased for us, the Father and the Son sent the Holy Spirit to [6] make us alive together with Christ (Eph. 2:5, regeneration, p. 24) and adopted us into the family, and gave us the full rights of sons (Gal. 4:5). And because of their great love for us, and to ensure the enduring and endearing character of our relationship to them (not theirs to us), they [7] sent the Holy Spirit into our hearts (Acts 2:1) as: [a] the "mark of ownership," (II Cor. 1:22), as [b] the "seal of our inheritance," a guarantee of what is to come (Eph. 1:13), as [c] "the Spirit of sonship" and assurance (Gal. 4:4-6; Rom. 8:15-16), as [d] a permanent resident and sanctifying guest in our hearts (Gal. 5:22, 23), and, [e] as the giver of gifts and empowerer for ministry for the benefit of the whole church and the world (Rom. 12:1-8; Eph. 4:7-13; I Cor. 12-14).¹

¹ This paragraph is in the form of a block quotation, but is the work of the author.

Notice that the Spirit's first work in us was regeneration (step [6]). Prior to that, we were dead—Ezekiel's "dry bones" (page 24). When he "quickened" us, we heard the Gospel for the first time, and believed. Before that, we had stony hearts, deaf ears, and blind eyes. Consider how amazing and gracious "Amazing Grace" is: regeneration *precedes* faith, but God "overlooks" the fact that without that work of the Spirit, we never would have believed, and credits our faith as righteousness (Rom. 4:5; Tit. 3:1-5). As the *Baptist Catechism* of 1742 says, the Spirit "persuades and enables us to embrace Jesus Christ" (Keach 1952, 23), and then takes up permanent residence in us. Regeneration (birth) lays the foundation for sanctification (growth).

We have posed several questions about the work of the Spirit in sanctification. To answer them, we will study a number of issues, from simple to complex, from devotional to vexing. *First*, we will compare the Old and New Covenant work of the Spirit, focusing on two prepositions that characterize the difference. *Second*, we will look at the paradox of "indwelling versus filling" by the Spirit. *Third*, we will consider the New Covenant relationship we have to God in Christ through the Spirit—"sonship." *Fourth*, in section "E" we will examine the principles and practice of life in the Spirit. Chapter six will have us visiting "bewitched" churches in the Roman province of Galatia.

1. The Holy Spirit and Prepositions

We cannot understand sanctification in the age of the Gospel if we fail to notice and give adequate weight to the *prepositions* used in the Scriptures when the work of the Holy Spirit is predicted in the future or described in the present. In Ezekiel 36:26, God tells us about where we will get the power to obey him under the New Covenant: "I will put my Spirit *in* you and cause you to walk in my laws and keep my commandments" (36:27 – **וְאֶת־רוּחִי אֶתֵּן בְּקִרְבְּכֶם**).

in you • I will put • my spirit • and

Watch the prepositions:

If you love me, you will obey what I command. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever—the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives *with* you and will be *in* you. I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you (Jn. 14:16–18, italics mine).

It would be hard to imagine a more critical use of “with” and “in” than this. In Africa, we speak English using Bantu syntax when we want to connote temporary possession. Thinking of a piece of candy, we might say, “*The candy is with me,*” that is, “I have the candy.” But if we said, “*The candy is in me,*” that would mean something altogether different. The day of Pentecost ushered in a new era for God’s people. Gone were those temporary residencies of the Holy Spirit so characteristic of the Old Testament narratives when the Spirit would “come upon” people (e.g. Moses and the seventy elders in Num. 11:25; Samson in Jud. 14:6; Saul in 1 Sam. 10:9, 11:6, 19:21; David in 1 Sam. 16:13 – an exceptional “anointing?”; Ezekiel in 2:1 “into” used, 11:5 “upon,” etc.).

The point is, the work of the Spirit under the New Covenant is vastly different—and superior—than under the Old, and we make a grave mistake by not keeping the difference in mind when we are developing a New Covenant theology of sanctification. As we read some Evangelical and Reformed theologians, we wonder if they have taken this all into account. True, even after Pentecost, the Apostles had “special fillings” for special ministries. (e.g., In Acts 4:8 Peter is “filled,” and in 13:9 Paul is “filled,”—in both instances the word is πλησθεῖς is used, lit. “having just been filled”) But, the Spirit *never left* them, only operated in them differently, and he will never leave us. As New Covenant sons and daughters, we live in a *fundamentally* different relationship to God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, and therefore to the law. Obedience to God’s commandments—in the fullness of their spiritual sense, and from the heart, is no longer a daunting prospect. Why? Because: “by dying to what once bound us, we have been released from the law so that we serve in the new way of the Spirit, and not in the old way of the written code”

(Rom. 7:6). Such words would never have been possible under the old dispensation of the law. The Old Testament saints did not experience the cleansing of their consciences before God: "The gifts and sacrifices being offered *were not able to clear the conscience of the worshiper*" (Heb. 9:9, emphasis mine).

Men like Moses and David who enjoyed a special relationship with God, were still obliged, year after year, to make personal contributions to that *river of blood* being continually sacrificed on their behalf. They did not have the constancy of fellowship that is our right as God's sons by the indwelling Holy Spirit. They had no Christ seated at the right hand of the Father on whom to "fix their eyes;" no Lamb Slain, no Great High Priest interceding for them. And their obedience was inferior to ours. In his *Christian Theistic Ethics*, Van Til insists that although David "loved the law. . . *he could not love the law or the will of God as much as a New Testament believer can*" (1964, 96). David, he says, was a rarity, but "*we all with unveiled face, behold the glory of our Redeemer*" (1964, 96). That is the vision the New Testament writers call us to enjoy under the all-glorious reign of the Gospel.

2. The Paradox of the Spirit: Indwelling vs. Filling

Before we move on, we must address an issue that, if not resolved now, will lead to confusion later. There is a paradox inherent in the Biblical language of the Spirit. Namely, how can all of these be true? [1] that we are *permanently indwelt* by the Spirit (Rom. 8:11; II Tim. 1:14, etc.); [2] that God "*keeps giving*" us the Spirit (Gal. 3:5); and, [3] that we are commanded to "*be filled*" with the Spirit (Eph. 5:18)? In other words, how can God give us *more* of the Spirit, if we already *have* the Spirit? And, if we already *have* the Spirit, how can we *be filled* with the Spirit?

Obviously, the Scriptures affirm all three. The enigma can be solved, however, if we keep in mind these divisions: First, we must keep the *permanent indwelling* of the Spirit separate from the *continued operation* of the Spirit. "Indwelling" is a permanent condition, and we "have the condition." We are "sealed unto the day of redemption" (Eph. 4:30).

Next, we must understand the faith relationship involved in his continued operation in us. There is *his sovereign leading*, and *our dependent following*—his gracious prompting and our obeying by faith. Faith links us to the Spirit's power for change. As we keep believing the Gospel, God keeps giving the Spirit (Gal. 3:5). The Spirit produces the fruit of the Spirit—sanctification. The key to this is seeing the cyclical operation involved: prompting, faith, the fruit of the Spirit, sanctification. Thus, Robert Shaw identified faith as the “instrumental means” of sanctification. Faith is a real instrument and it accomplishes real work.

Some theologians, in straining themselves to help God protect his sovereignty, virtually deny that we contribute anything of substance to our sanctification. They fill their writings with criticisms of the views of others (patently wrong views), but after they are finished, there is a scant paragraph, or none at all, on the proper Biblical means of sanctification! They hide their lack of understanding behind the smoke screen of scholarly criticism. They have nothing instructive of their own to say except: “*obey*” This is hardly encouraging. We already know what we should do; we need the power to do it. They react to the idea of the real instrumentality of faith in sanctification, as if we were holding God hostage to our faith. They equate cooperating with God by faith, with the control of God through faith. They fail to see that God *does not will* to control us with the same degree of sovereignty in our sanctification as in our regeneration. If God did effectually will our sanctification, we would all be perfect. “*This is the will of God, even your sanctification*” (1 Thess. 4:3).

Other well-meaning theologians have tried a half-way-house solution by positing that God has a “decretive will” and a “permissive will.” That is no real solution. God has foreordained whatsoever comes to pass. Nothing escapes the umbrella of his decrees. The solution is this: there are many things God wills, that, since he lives above time, he wills to “wait” for—the consummation of history and the judgment of the devil, for instance. God regenerated us by his Spirit—an act of absolute sovereignty (dead men can’t will themselves to live). The Spirit worked faith in us, and from that point in time, God willed to “relax” the *intensity of* (not the fact of) his sovereign control over our persons, so that we are responsible to appropriate his

grace by an obedient faith for sanctification—within the context of his decrees. He willed the end (our sanctification), the Agent (the Spirit), and the means (our faith).

Before our conversion, we were “not able not to sin”: *non posse non peccare*. With our slavery to sin broken in Christ, we are “able not to sin, or to sin”: *posse non peccare; posse peccare*. In heaven, bless the thought, we will “not be able to sin”: *non posse peccare*, but for now, we must fight the battle—choose to sin or obey. Until that time, God has sovereignly willed to wait for our “entire sanctification” (to take a passing shot at Wesley).

That God has “relaxed” the intensity of his control does not imply that we are all alone in our choosing, or that God is at the mercy of our faith. God forbid! He has *willed* that the Holy Spirit be the Divine Agent of sanctification, and *willed* that our faith be the instrumental means of it: progression, by cooperation, by faith. The instrumental nature of faith implies that it has real effect when we use it. We must remember that “*God works in us to will and to do his good pleasure*” (Phil. 2:13), but that our exercise of faith is a part of his willing. The use of John 17:17 as a proof text for *The Bible* as a book as the means of sanctification is poor contextual exegesis (“Sanctify them by the truth, Thy word is truth” – Jn. 17:17). Calvin said, “*the word here denotes the doctrine of the Gospel which the apostles had already heard from the mouth of their Master and which they were afterward to preach to others*” (Calvin 19, 2:180). (cf. Jn. 8:31ff. Jesus’ “word” [λόγος] is the truth that sets us free.) The “word of truth,” Jesus’ objectively true word, no matter how true, is ineffectual for sanctification apart from our ongoing faith in Christ. Suggesting otherwise is Biblicism. There is a sense in which the Spirit’s call to sanctification *is resistible*. Paul speaks of this as “grieving” the Holy Spirit (λυπέω, lit. “make sorrowful,” Eph. 4:30), and warns us against “quenching” the Spirit (σβέννυμι, lit. “extinguish,” I Thess. 5:19). Do we do this? Oh yes. We do it all the time—every day, perhaps hundreds of times a day, by thoughts, words and actions that fail to measure up to the standard of the law—loving God with our whole heart, and loving our neighbor as ourselves. *But, we are not free to sin as we please!*

God has us on a tether—as some parents put their toddlers on “leashes” in shopping malls. We are never fully aware of the manifold ways the Spirit tugs on that tether, pulling us in this direction, and that—always in the direction of Christ. The problem is, there *is* slack.

There is a direct correlation between the “legal spirit” of some Reformed teachers, and their reluctance to give the Biblical teaching on human responsibility in sanctification its proper emphasis. The Scriptures teach the necessity of a constant exercise of faith in Christ for the process of sanctification to be ongoing. Faith gives us the Spirit; the Spirit sanctifies. A legal spirit invariably manifests itself in several ways: [1] a low view of the law that majors on rules and minors on love; [2] an overemphasis on the efficacy of the outward means of sanctification; [3] a naive trust in the automatic effectiveness of those outward means (“Read your Bible!”), and, [4] a failure to perceive, and therefore repent of, the daily subtle operations of the flesh in their own lives. Thus they espouse a theology of sanctification which is unarguably systematic, but patently un-Biblical in its balance, and reflects nothing more than their own anemic experience of ongoing sanctification, devoid of repentant faith, its working through selfless love, and daily reliance on the power of the Holy Spirit.³

Sanctification is a dynamic, painful, and most often messy process. Most dying is. “*I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live. . .!*” (Gal. 2:20a) But as we believe the Gospel (look to Christ, trust in Christ’s merits) more and more, the Father and the Son, in answer to our faith, “keep giving” us the Spirit (Gal. 3:5, Greek present tense). We do not get more of him in some literal volumetric sense of “being filled;” we are brought more under his

³ We intend this as more of a confession and call to repentance than an accusation. The author embraced, lived, taught, and ministered according to this deficient theology of faith and the Spirit for twenty-five years—beginning in seminary, and on into various ministries of preaching, teaching, discipling, youth ministry, church planting in Africa, and pastoring two congregations in the USA. A major paradigm shift occurred in our theology of sanctification and ministry when in 1990 we were introduced to “Sonship training” by its originator, Westminster Seminary professor, Dr. C. John “Jack” Miller (see the thesis dedication). We know first-hand the deadening effect of a theology of sanctification and ministry that reproduces Pharisees by encouraging reliance on human effort rather than conscious, daily dependence on Christ and the Holy Spirit. It is out of this ample and regrettable experience that the author has emerged as a sympathetic critic.

influence, and thereby enabled to love, which is the fulfillment of the law. Notice too, that although our dependence is on the Spirit, our conscious union is not with the Spirit, but with the Father and Son who “keep giving us the Spirit” (Jn. 15:26; 16:13–15).

We have drawn together the New Testament’s teaching on the work of the Spirit and put them in the form of a litany. The focus here is on our response to the Spirit’s continual promptings to: holiness (inreach), worship (upreach), and ministry (outreach). We begin with the climax to Jesus’ “ask, seek, knock” trilogy, and move on to major in Paul’s letters.

The Work of the Spirit, and Our Work by the Spirit:

Jesus and Paul tell us to:

Ask for the Spirit – Luke 11:13 – “The Father gives to those who ask. him.”

Keep in step with the Spirit – Gal. 5:25b – “march in step” – στοιχέω

Walk in the Spirit – Gal. 5:16 – “walk” – περιπατέω

Pray always in the Spirit – Eph. 2:28 – access to; 6:18 pray in

Be filled with the Spirit – Eph. 5:18 – filled – πληροῦσθε

Put to death the misdeeds of the body by the Spirit – Rom. 8:13, *and* . . .

Know the fellowship of the Spirit. – 2 Cor. 13:14; Phil. 2:1 – κοινωνία

And, we are to:

Be taught of the Spirit – Jn. 14:26 (he reminds *and* teaches us)

Live by the Spirit – Gal. 5:25a – Εἰ ζῶμεν πνεύματι

Cry “Abba-Father!” by the Spirit – Rom. 8:15 – ἐν ᾧ κράζομεν (instrumentality)

Be led by the Spirit – Rom. 8:14 – ἄγω – to lead—as taking by the hand

Be led into all truth by the Spirit – Jn. 14:17 – the truth which makes us free

Sow to the Spirit rather than the flesh – Gal. 6:8

Have our minds set on the Spirit – Rom. 8:6,9 (NIV has “controlled by”)

Bear the fruit of the Spirit – Gal. 5:22, 23, *and, are to* . . .

Serve using the gifts of the Spirit. – Rom. 12:6ff; 1 Cor. 12:4ff; Eph. 4:8ff

There is an obvious and inescapable principle shouting from this evidence:

Sanctification Involves Our Constant Cooperation with the Spirit by Faith

The prominence given to the work of the Spirit here is astonishing. A more cooperative, interdependent relationship between two persons could hardly be imagined—his sovereign initiation, and our dependent response by faith. Our ability to live and work beyond the crippling limits of our religious flesh is contingent on our conscious, ongoing, dependence on the righteousness of Christ, a faith which the Holy Spirit is pleased to bless with the manifestation of the character of Christ seen in the Spirit's fruit, gifts, and power to serve. A. A. Hodge said the believer, "*cooperates with the Holy Ghost in the work of sanctification. . . . The Holy Ghost. . . gives the grace, and prompts and directs in its exercise, and the soul exercises it*" (Hodge 1996, 195).

Sad to say, the Spirit's ministry as reflected in this litany is rarely seen in balance in the Evangelical, Reformed and Pentecostal theologies of our day. Our Pentecostal brothers and sisters tend to live in perpetual turbulence because they major on only one aspect of the work of the Spirit—his gifts. Even there, their tendency is to major on the more remarkable ones: tongues, prophecy, miracles, etc. When asked to identify which of the first-century churches was the most "spiritually gifted," it's no contest. My students invariably answer, "Corinth." To the follow-up question as to which church was the most immoral and corrupt, the answer is the same. This underscores the grave danger of the misuse of the Spirit's gracious work. When we "use" the Spirit and his gifts as excuses to boast in our Spirituality, we are being untruthful, and forfeit his moral unction in the same breath. He simply will not be *used* to glorify man, and when we try, we pay an awful price.

The Evangelical and Reformed denominations have overreacted to the unbalanced views of the 'charismatics' with an imbalance of our own. In an attempt to protect ourselves from what we perceive as their dreadful excess of personality, we have virtually denied that the Holy Spirit directly intervenes to lead us, fearfully labeling such ideas with "extra-Biblical revelation." Oh, we talk much about the Holy Spirit, and pray perfunctorily for "his blessing" at nearly every service. Could it be that what we are really asking for is that he bless *our* plans so that we will be (or look) successful in the work of the Kingdom?

Both of these styles of Christian life and ministry are deviations from the Biblical picture our litany has painted of a balanced, daily, dependence on the operation of the Spirit for every relationship, every facet of our lives, and every ministry we undertake for God. Sinners are self-effort addicts. We think of ourselves as people who need *just a little extra help* to prop up our own strength. When we see the truth—that we are Luther’s “*worm in a ring of fire*” with nowhere to turn but up—the Spirit will be ours in greater measure and we will bear much fruit for the glory of God—fruit that would have never come forth from the energy of our flesh. The good news is, the way out of our dilemma is a return to the same, simple Gospel faith we exercised for our justification. It is this faith-focus, this Christ-focus, the Holy Spirit will bless with his ministry—in all of its parts, with all of his fullness.

This brings us to the relational context in which all sanctification takes place: the new relationship we have to the Father, through Christ, by the Spirit—sonship.

3. The Spirit of Sonship

At this point, we want to focus on the ministry of the Holy Spirit as he gives us an *inner consciousness* of the fact that we belong to Christ. *The Heidelberg Catechism* (1563) states this with a warmth that endears our hearts to Christ:

Q. 1. What is my only comfort in life and in death?

A. That I am not my own, but belong—body and soul, in life and in death—to my faithful Savior Jesus Christ.

He has fully paid for all my sins with his precious blood, and has set me free from the tyranny of the devil. He also watches over me in such a way that not a hair can fall from my head without the will of my Father in heaven: in fact, all things must work together for my salvation.

Because I belong to him, Christ, by his Holy Spirit, assures me of eternal life and makes me whole-heartedly willing and ready from now on to live for him.

(Ecumenical Creeds, 1987, 11)

Here is a review of our earlier look at the Spirit’s work after regeneration (p. 129).

And because of their great love for us, and to ensure the enduring and endearing character of our relationship to them (not theirs to us), they [7] sent the Holy Spirit into our hearts (Acts 2:1) as: [a] the “mark of ownership,” (II Cor. 1:22), as [b] the “seal of our inheritance,” a guarantee of what is to come (Eph. 1:13), as [c] “the Spirit of sonship” and assurance (Gal. 4:4-6; Rom. 8:15–16), as [d] a permanent resident and sanctifying guest in our hearts (Gal. 5:22, 23).

The Holy Spirit performs a trio of operations in us: *sealing*: he is “the seal of ownership, guaranteeing our inheritance” (II Cor. 1:22); *assurance*: he “bears witness with our spirit that we are the children of God” (Rom. 8:16); and related to that, *adoption*: he is “the spirit of sonship” (Rom. 8:15). The *Sonship* relationship is inclusive of and overarches all three.

It is in this new relationship of our sonship that we experience sanctification. Paul contrasts our sonship with our former state of being “slaves to sin” (Rom. 6:6, 17), slaves to other gods (Gal. 4:8), sons of Hagar the “slave woman,” and slaves under the law (Gal. 4:4). But now, being united to Christ by faith, our status has completely changed! Now we are sons of the free-woman, Sarah (Gal. 4:28–31), and therefore “slaves to God” (Rom. 6:22), and “slaves to righteousness” (Rom. 6:18). In almost Hegelian fashion, Paul announces the glad paradox that in this new slavery of ours, “*we are no longer slaves, but sons!*” Paul sums up his theology of sonship in this unique pair of texts—the only ones containing the intimate, double-name for God, “Abba-Father.”

What I am saying is that as long as the heir is a child, he is no different from a slave, although he owns the whole estate. He is subject to guardians and trustees until the time set by his father. So also, when we were children, we were in slavery under the basic principles of the world. But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law, to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons. Because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, “*Abba, Father.*” So you are no longer a slave, but a son; and since you are a son, God has made you also an heir. (Gal. 4:1–6)

Those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, “*Abba, Father.*” The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children. Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with

Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory (Rom. 8:14-17).

The Holy Spirit is "*the Spirit of sonship*," and the Father and Son sent him to us so that we would never be alone (objectively) or feel alone (subjectively)—never feel like "orphans" (ὀρφανούς – Jn. 14:18). Twenty-four hours a day, the indwelling Spirit is crying out Abba-Father! in our hearts. (Paul uses the verb κράζω, the one used for the loud "braying" of blind Bartimeus, "JESUS, SON OF DAVID! HAVE MERCY ON ME!" – Mk. 10:47). Why would the Third Person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit, be *shouting* out the name of the First Person in this intimate, double way—in our hearts? (*cf.* Jesus in Gethsemane in Mk. 14:36) (Robertson 1931, 302) Certainly it is not for his benefit, but for ours! Like a prompter who, in the midst of a performance must cue the actor who has forgotten his lines, the Holy Spirit shouts through our deafness to assure us that we are not orphans, but loved, accepted, delighted-in sons and daughters of the Father.

And what are "the lines" we have forgotten? Paul's Romans 8 passage completes the Galatians 4 thought. "*By him [the Spirit], we cry, Abba-Father!*" Again, the verb is κράζω. This our special cry, our shout, our *primal scream*. Crying it is thoroughly Christian Gestalt therapy—the essence of faith that, when cried in faith, is empowering. "Abba" is Hebrew, Arabic, Aramaic, and Amharic (Ethiopic) for "Daddy." As such it is the most intimate imaginable form of address for God. This child-cry instantly transports us, sinful though we are, right to the door of our Father's Throne Room—and closer, up to his Throne—and closer (dare we say it), into his very arms! Jesus is the Father's "embrace" of us in the Gospel—this Jesus who embraced children, who welcomed John's head on his breast at the Last Supper, and said, "I and the Father are one; he who has seen me, *has seen the Father*" (Jn. 10:30; 14:9). Will we be received at the Father's Throne? If we belong to Christ, we will! But, are we *clean enough*? Indeed we are! Look to the Father's right hand. Who is seated there? Our surety, Christ Jesus, our Great High Priest. It was this grand vision of Christ that moved

Charles Wesley to write “Arise, My Soul, Arise!” Verse 4 reads: “My God is reconciled; his pardoning voice I hear; he owns me for his child; I shall no longer fear; with confidence I now draw nigh, and Father, Abba-Father cry” (*Trinity* 1990, 305). [full text page 77] This cry is the cry of a son—our cry. *It is a cry for all seasons.* We should use it when we are tempted and need power; when we have sinned and need mercy; when we are wounded and need healing; when we are alone and feel afraid, or when we are jubilant over some victory. This cry is our divinely-given right as free sons and daughters. Let us use it! Our Father’s heart is filled with delight at the sound of it. He never tires of hearing it—*Abba! Abba! Abba!* Passionately crying this cry is not “emotionalism,” “mysticism,” “Pietism” or any other “-ism.” It is God’s design for our *normal Christian experience*. This is the intimacy with God that Jesus died to give us. Anything less is “slave-life”—cold-hearted “elder-brotherism” [cf. pages 30–32].

G. C. Berkouwer is one of only a handful of Reformed scholars who has grasped the significance of these passages for sanctification and given adequate attention to sonship as the *conscious sphere* of our sanctification. He writes:

It is undeniable that the Scriptures speak [in various ways] differently about the adoption to sonship. Paul does indeed refer to the adoption as an eschatological reality (Rom. 8:32) [we “wait for our adoption as sons”], but he speaks no less about the reception of the Spirit of adoption by which we cry, Abba, Father. . . .

This reality of sonship is in contrast with the righteousness of works. For the secret of this sonship lies in the acknowledgment of grace. *All progress in sanctification moves within the boundaries of being sons of the Father.* This progress is not an automatic, causal development from first-fruits to full harvest but a progression in faith, prayer, meekness, and confession of guilt. *The “more and more” [of growth in grace] is applicable only if kept within the bounds of sonship.*

This life, the Christian life, that is — can only be the manifestation of our sonship. Thus we understand that progress in sanctification can never consist in building ourselves up on our own morality (Berkouwer 1952, 111–13, emphasis mine).

What does Berkouwer mean by saying, that this sonship is “in contrast with the righteousness of works,” and that “all progress in sanctification moves within the boundaries

of being sons of the Father?" He means that only sons, self-conscious sons, grow. Slaves grow in knowledge; sons grow in grace. Slaves serve out of duty. Sons serve out of love. Slaves look for rewards. For sons, the relationship is the reward. Slaves watch their master's hands. Sons gaze on their Father's face.

The sonship relationship *defines us* objectively because this is how God thinks of us—as his beloved sons and daughters. By faith, our sonship becomes our core identity—the way we see ourselves in the mirror, the way we see ourselves before God and others. "*I am a son!*" is the intellectual and emotional foundation on which we grow spiritually. Cry it.

Once again we will stand the weak next to the strong. In stark contrast to Berkouwer's robust view of the Christian life as sonship, we have Miladin's view of the Christian life as legal obedience. Both aim at obedience, but one is the obedience of faith, the other, the obedience to law. It is a question of where the heart is focused. We have affirmed that the Christian life is to be lived "inside the wall of God's law" (page 83), but with our eyes on Christ—not the law written on the wall. Miladin's training manual for Christians includes two lessons under the heading "God and His Sanctifying Work." Lesson 9 is entitled "Law as a Rule of Life;" Lesson 10 is "The Summary of the Moral Law—Ten Commandments." This is the sum total of his teaching on the Christian life. He begins "The Law as a Rule of Life" by saying:

The moral law summarized in the Ten Commandments is the sphere or horizon within which the Holy Spirit sanctifies and enables the true believer to persevere. (Miladin 1974, 35). [Review ch.2, pp. 50, 51]

We agree with that statement, but affirm much more, and Miladin's book says *no more*. He has us staring at the law again. In his view, "the sphere or horizon" of sanctification is the law. For Berkouwer, "all progress in sanctification moves within the boundaries of sonship." These are concentric circles, but the power to obey comes only in the "inner ring" of sonship. Thus Paul rejoices that "*God has made us competent as ministers of a new covenant—not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life*" (II Cor. 3:6).

We say in English, "*If looks could kill. . .*" Be careful where you look. "*The letter kills.*" We have a choice to make, a faith-choice: to live like orphans, or sons (Jn. 14:18). [See: Part I, APPENDIX II, for the "Orphans vs. Sons List," a 24-point comparison] "*It is . . . not enough,*" Berkouwer writes, "*for a man to say that he honors God and for that reason strives toward holiness. The people of Israel offer proof that one may live in a climate of absolute imperatives and still perish*" (Berkouwer 1952, 19). We will never live-out our sonship perfectly; we won't even come close. But, if we will at least show up at *church* instead of the *synagogue*, we can make a good start.

E. Essential Operating Principles and the Practice of Sanctifying Faith

It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God--that is, our righteousness, sanctification and redemption. Therefore, as it is written: "Let him who boasts boast in the Lord" (1 Cor. 1:30, 31).

Under the Old Covenant, to save and sanctify his people, God worked within the sphere of the administration of Law. Of its two parts, *ceremonial* and *moral*, the ceremonial aspect imperfectly foreshadowed the coming work of Christ, and was designed to reckon with the guilt of sin. Its moral aspect was intended to limit the power of sin—something it "*was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature*" (Rom. 8:3a). As New Covenant Christians, our relationship to God, and hence to the law, has radically changed—"*What the law was powerless to do. . . God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering*" (Rom. 8:3b). We live under a new sphere, and breathe a refreshing new atmosphere of freedom from the curse of the law!

God has dealt decisively with the guilt and power of sin in the new way of the Gospel. In Christ, God is our *Abba*. We live under the warm sunshine of his love as adopted sons and daughters. Christ, our Savior and light, has banished the dark shadows of the law with its threatenings and warnings. We are full heirs together with him of all the Father's spiritual riches. The Holy Spirit lives in our hearts as the seal of our inheritance, and the sanctifier of

our souls, pointing us to the “new commandment” of love written on our hearts (Jn. 13:34). The moral law which once filled our vision has become an “outer perimeter” to protect us from deceiving ourselves and the risen Christ, not the law, fill our vision. We live a life of faith: we walk by faith; we trust Jesus’ blood and righteousness; we depend on the efficacy of his continual intercession for us, and, in response to that faith, he “keeps giving” us the Spirit by whom we keep his law of love—a love which *more than fulfills* the bare demands of what is written on the perimeter wall. (see *SONSHIP*, page S5-3)

Looking inside the sphere of sonship, we detect a number of principles that govern the relationship of faith and the Spirit. Our faith, no matter how earnest, will be ineffectual for growth unless these are in operation. We will note them, and, in addition, list five characteristics of faith (five “P’s”) as it operates in sanctification. Many other principles of faith could be mentioned, but we will omit those that are obvious, briefly mention those we have already touched on, and cover more thoroughly the ones that may be new to some. Speaking of “atmosphere,” we will need a firm grip on all of these concepts, for in the next chapter, we walk into the disorienting atmosphere of a theological war zone—the Galatian controversy.

1. Operating Principles Sanctifying Faith

a) Faith is sanctifying in its own nature A. A. Hodge used the question and answer format in his 1860 work, *Outlines of Theology*. Regarding sanctification he asked: “*What office do the Scriptures ascribe to faith in sanctification?*” His answer:

Faith is the first grace in order exercised by the soul consequent upon regeneration, and the root of all other graces in principle.—Acts xv. 9; xxxvi. 18. It is instrumental in securing sanctification therefore—

1st. By securing the change of the believer’s relation to God and the law, as a condition of life and favor.

2d. By securing his union with Christ.—1 Cor. xiii; Gal. ii. 20; Col. iii. 3.

3d. *It is sanctifying in its own nature, since in its widest sense, faith is that spiritual state of the soul in which it holds living active communion with spiritual truth* (Hodge 1972, 524, emphasis mine).

Thomas Watson, sounds almost mystical in his *A Body of Divinity* (1692). Extolling the sanctifying power of faith, he wrote:

Lapidaries [gemstone cutters] say there is no precious stone but that has *virtutem insitam* in it, some hidden virtue in it: so I may say of faith, it has some secret virtue in it; it anchors the soul on Christ; it has both a justifying and sanctifying virtue; it fetches blood out of Christ's side to pardon, and water out of his side to purge it; it works by love; it constrains to duty; it makes the head study for Christ, the tongue confess him, and the hands work for him (Watson 1970, 299).

b) Faith really changes us The question arises: *are we actually sanctified, i.e. do we really improve, or is our holiness only by virtue of the holiness of Christ imputed to us?* There has been a long-standing debate on this, with Calvinists and Arminians sharply divided, and a host of others trying to walk in-between (Shaw 1974, 142). The *Westminster Confession* states unequivocally that believers are “really and personally” sanctified (n.d.WCF, XIII:1). In 1899, P. T. Forsyth penned *Christian Perfection* which, despite the provocative title, is a masterful rebuttal of perfectionistic theology. He said:

It is a fatal mistake to think of holiness as a possession which we have distinct from our faith, and conferred upon it. That is a Catholic idea still saturating Protestant pietism. . . . [Wesley and “victorious life” teaching]. Faith is the very highest form of our dependence on God. We never outgrow it. We refine it, but we never transcend it. Whatever other fruits of the Spirit we show, they grow upon faith, and faith which is in its nature repentance. . . . It is untrue to think of holiness or sinlessness as a possession or quality, and experience of the soul, and so distinct from a previous and qualifying faith. Every Christian experience is an experience of faith; that is, it is an experience of what we have not (Forsyth 1899, 7, 8, comment mine).

Forsyth, a Calvinistic Congregationalist, seemed to be charging the Westminster divines with error. It must be remembered, however, that *The Confession*, in affirming that we are “really and personally” sanctified, was arguing against license. Forsyth was arguing against Protestant perfectionism, a holdover he charged, from the theology of sainthood in Catholicism. He insisted that holiness is not some self-congratulatory status which we achieve, or a specific destination at which we may arrive. He was on target, of course.

Think of the labels we Protestants attach to some Christians: “prayer warrior,” “saint,” “dedicated,” “sold-out for Christ.” Those things may describe some believers on the surface, but if we could see into their hearts as God does, we would be appalled. They are just like us—some of them probably worse. Jack Miller hosted J. I. Packer for a Bible conference at the New Life OPC church he was pastoring in Philadelphia. Packer preached on the text, “esteem others more highly than yourselves” (Phil. 2:3), and during the open question time, a confused listener queried: “*But Doctor Packer, how can I esteem others more highly than myself, when I really am better than some others?*” Packer, with his characteristic calm, answered with words to this effect: “Just think about your secret thought-life, and imagine that those people you see as worse than you, knew everything about you. Then ask yourself, ‘Why should they esteem me?’” *The Westminster Confession* balanced its “really and truly sanctified” in a later section (XVI. IV.), by saying that those who “in their obedience, attain to the greatest height which is possible in this life . . . fall short of much which in duty they are bound to do” (n.d., 17,18).

So, to pit Forsyth and *The Confession* against each other is just another of those false antitheses of the James versus Paul variety. Both make valid points. If we claim to be in Christ but manifest no growth, we are self-deceived. We should grow in love—we must grow in love. Our growth in love should be observable, measurable, so that God, and the people around us *feel* loved. Otherwise our profession is only noise—Paul’s “sounding brass and tinkling cymbal” (I Cor. 13:1). Likewise, if we parade around laying claim to some higher level of “holiness,” we are deceiving ourselves. Until we get to heaven, holiness will not be a settled state of being. In this life, we will struggle. There will be great victories and staggering defeats, but the overall direction will be upward in “a coherent line of faith” (Forsyth 1899, 44). R. L. Dabney was right in saying that repentance and faith are “the mother graces.” Repentance must be a way of life because sinning is a way of life. King David’s adulterous alliance with Bathsheba earned him the dubious distinction of first place

in a long line of moral casualties who have apparently thought they had climbed to the highest rung of the ladder of holiness—only to discover that it was just one small step to the bottom. Yes, we “become holy,” but only by faith in Christ, and the faith that changes us today must change us tomorrow. “Holy habits” can easily become idols—objects of pride and boasting. Genuine Christian holiness is humbled by its own fragility and may be easily recognized by its unashamed readiness to confess: “*Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am [present tense] the worst*” (1 Tim. 1:15). John writes: “*Little children, keep yourselves from idols*” (1 Jn. 5:1 KJV), and we could add, “especially the idol of our own ‘holiness.’”

c) Faith “clothes us” in Christ Rather than looking to our obedience as the root of sanctification, we look to Christ as the root of it. Our obedience is “the obedience of faith” (Rom. 1:5). In Christ, we have the power to keep the law of Christ. Faith in Christ “clothes us in him”—positionally (legally) for justification, and by our ongoing faith in Christ, we are “consciously clothed in him” (morally) for sanctification. Faith gives us Christ’s righteousness positionally, experientially, and emotionally. This explains Paul’s imperative: “*Clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the sinful nature*” (Rom. 13:14). It is in this “consciously clothing” of ourselves with Christ that gives us the Spirit. The Spirit works his fruit in us—fruit which includes the moral ability to say “no” to our carnal desires, and “yes” to loving God and others.

Count Nikolaus von Zinzendorf, founder of the German Moravians and its famous settlement (Herrnhut), wrote a hymn based on this Pauline theme—“*Herr Jesu Christ, Mein's Lebens Licht*.” Hymnologist Erik Routley notes that although the literary quality of Zinzendorf’s 2,000 hymns was not the highest, they were songs with which “*the congregation sang themselves hoarse for the love of Christ*” (1952, 50). Routley imagines the young Englishman who translated the hymn for us walking up the path to the chapel door at Herrnhut and being forever changed by the vision of the risen Christ that gripped him there (1952, 67).

Here is John Wesley's translation from the German.

*Jesus, Thy blood and righteousness; my beauty are, my glorious dress;
midst flaming worlds, in these arrayed, with joy shall I lift up my head!
Bold shall I stand in that great day; for who ought to my charge shall lay?
Fully absolved from these I am: from sin, and fear, and guilt and shame. "*
(Trinity 1990, 520, vs. 1, 2)

Robert Haldane (b. 1764) commenting on Romans 1:17 ("the righteousness that comes by faith") noted that Christ has fulfilled all the demands of the law for us, and that "everything that draws it off from the significance of this tends to darken the Scriptures, to cloud the apprehension of the truth in the children of God, and to corrupt the simplicity that is in Christ." Then he echoed Paul, the writer to the Hebrews (12:2), and Zinzendorf when he told us what should capture the believer's vision:

To that righteousness is the eye of the believer ever to be directed; on that righteousness must he rest; on that righteousness must he live; on that righteousness must he die; in that righteousness must he appear before the judgment seat; in that righteousness must he stand for ever in the presence of a righteous God. "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord; my soul shall be joyful in my God: for He hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, He hath covered me with the robe of righteousness," Isaiah 61:10 (Haldane n.d., 132).

d) Faith is motivated by love We have spoken against duty as a motive, but we touch on it again because here in Africa (as in America) it looms too large in Christian minds. The law, threats, warnings, appeals to do one's duty and fear God (terror) dominate much of the preaching. Too, there is a twisted, coercive use of "gratitude" that exacts obedience through guilt. Such teaching is deadly poison of the soul and a threat to genuine spirituality.

William Gurnall, in his 1665 classic, *The Christian in Compleat Armour*, defined "the obedience of faith" as the "obedience of the heart." He argued that if our obedience does not flow from a heart of love, it is *not* faith-obedience, but "a false faith which apes true faith" (1964, 2:33). Far from suggesting that God might be satisfied with a dutiful obedience,

he made "obedience of the heart" a litmus test of a genuine profession. He asked "what stamp," can be found on faith's obedience to distinguish it from all the counterfeits that the devil would "never grudge us having?" He listed two characteristics. [1] It is an obedience of the heart. [2] It is "full of self denial" (1964, 33). He spoke to the first by saying:

Faith's obedience begins at the heart, and from thence it diffuseth and dilates itself to the outward man, till it overspreads the whole man in a sincere endeavor. [Note the fountain of sincere endeavor—faith!] As in natural life, the first part that lives is the heart, so the first that faith subdues into obedience is the heart. It is called a "faith which purifieth the heart," Ac.xv.9. And the believing Romans "obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered to them. . . Ro. vi. 17" (Gurnall 1964, 2:33).

To illustrate: American parents who are determined for their children "to love one another" are known to issue an order such as this: "*Billy, you hug your sister right now, and tell her you're sorry!*" Billy's wooden embrace and grudging apology may fulfill the bare requirements of parental law, but their real effect is to leave Billy feeling greatly irritated, and Sally deeply unloved. If you have ever been on the receiving end of (or have given) a "*Billy hug*," you know the difference between love and duty. So does God.

e) Faith works through love Gurnall has more to say on this. Commenting on Galatians 5:6, "In Christ Jesus, neither circumcision nor uncircumcision is any value; the only thing that counts, is faith, expressing itself [inf. ἐνερπύω] through love." He says:

Love is the affection that governs this royal fort of man's heart... And indeed, it is faith that brings the heart over into subjection and obedience to God, by putting it under a law of love Ga. v.6. "faith which worketh through love." First faith worketh love, and then it worketh by it. Or as a statuary [sculptor], to make some difficult piece, before he goes about it, finding his hands so numb with cold, that he cannot handle his tools so nimbly as he should, goes first to the fire, and, with the help of its heat, chafes them till they, once stiff and numb become agile and active, then to work he falls; so faith brings to the soul—awk [awkward] and listless enough, God knows, to any duty—unto the meditations of the peerless, matchless love of God in Christ to it; and at this fire faith stays the Christian's thoughts till his affections begin to kindle and come to some sense of this love of God, and now the Christian bestirs himself for God with might and mien (Gurnall 1964, 2:33–4).

That is a powerful insight. First, he said, faith is born in our apprehension of the love of Christ for us. Then, because the Holy Spirit is given by faith, faith “works” love. And then, by the Spirit’s enablement, faith works *by* love. We have mentioned the Scottish addendum to the *Westminster Confession—The Sum of Saving Knowledge and the Practical Use Thereof*.³ It takes great pains to uphold the law, but takes great care to avoid legalism. After affirming that obedience comes by faith, it states that “the obedience of the law must flow from love” (1 Tim. 1:5), and that “the end of the law is love.” The phrase, “*obedience to the law in love*,” is repeated three times, and our love is mentioned fifteen times. To strengthen that, it declares in God’s estimation, works done apart from faith are “*naughty and null*” (1973, 341–343). [Part I, APPENDIX G] J. Grescham Machen put it this way: “Love, according to the New Testament is not the means of salvation, but is the finest fruit of it; a man is saved by faith, not by love; but he is saved by faith in order that he may love” (1962, 217).

2. The Practice of Sanctifying Faith

a) It is *paradoxical* (trusting not trying—active not passive)

(1) **Trusting, not trying** *Faith is a great paradox*: it does not work; it trusts. Yet, it is not passive; it works through love! In his *What Is Faith?*, Machen notes this passive aspect of faith. The context is his discussion of the New Testament concept of the flesh—“*a mighty power which drags us resistlessly into the bottomless abyss of evil*.” Machen says that when we experience that powerful undertow of the flesh, then and only then, do we feel our guilt and misery to the point that we begin scouting around for some-

³ In our view, this document should be studied by the Presbyterian Church in America and appended to *The Westminster Standards*. Our denomination is infected by a legal spirit that manifests itself in a focus on, and pride in the outward performance of duties and ministries. We virtually train one another to rely on our works for sanctification. The section entitled “The Evidences of True Faith,” especially the third point, is a clear and convincing reminder that our sanctification is carried on by faith.

thing stronger than our own weak wills to help us. Where do we get power like that? Not by trying. Machen says:

True faith, strictly speaking, does not do anything; it does not give, but receives. So when one says that we do something by faith, that is just another way of saying that we do nothing—at least that we do nothing of ourselves. It is of the very nature of faith, strictly speaking, to do nothing. So when it is said that faith works through love, that means that through faith, instead of doing something for ourselves we allow someone else to help us. That force which enters our life at the beginning through faith, before we could do anything at all to please God, and which then strengthens and supports us in the battle that it has enabled us to begin, is the power of the Spirit of God. . . (Machen 1962, 217).

Most Reformed theologians, shown the first few sentences of that quote without the venerable name of Machen attached would hurl the charge, “*Quietism!*” Machen has simply affirmed one side of the paradox of sanctifying faith: it is passive, not active.

(2) It is active, not passive Paul says “I buffet my body and make it my slave, lest, after having preached to others, I become a castaway” (1 Cor. 9:27). It would be difficult to imagine a stronger metaphor for expending energy in battle against the flesh. The writer to the Hebrews says we are to “*pursue peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no man shall see the Lord*” (12.14, NASB).

So, the question is not *whether* we should expend energy in our sanctification, but *where*? Where do we focus? On trying to “be holy?” On trying to keep a list of rules designed to keep us from sinful practices? Paul tells the Colossians that trying to attain holiness by rule-keeping is a dead end. It seems like a good idea, he says, but there is a slight problem: it doesn’t work. He asks them why they are submitting to commands such as:

“Do not handle! Do not taste! Do not touch!”. . . Such regulations indeed have an appearance of wisdom, with their self-imposed worship, their false humility and their harsh treatment of the body, but they lack any value in restraining sensual indulgence (Col. 2:21, 23).

We must not think of faith as just another way to describe our moral willpower. Faith is not willing, but trusting; the trusting produces the willing. That is why faith is so powerful in

our weakness. We are moved out of the way. Apparently, Paul was so strong in himself that he could make religion work for him. So, in order for him to be usable, the Father gave him a special affliction to keep him dependent on Christ (the nature of which remains a mystery). God does nothing purposelessly, so we can safely assume that Paul's super-human fruit in church planting would have been impossible apart from that "thorn." It made him *weak in Paul*, which left him no alternative but to be strong in the Lord. He asked for the thorn to be taken away, but God's answer was, "No Paul!"

"My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." [So, Paul resolves:] Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, *so that Christ's power may rest on me*. That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. *For when I am weak, then I am strong* (II Cor. 12:9, emphasis mine).

Paul's thorn gives special significance to Philippians 4:13: "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me," and II Corinthians 3:5: "Our sufficiency is not from ourselves."

Our paradox is resolved when we faithfully maintain both sides. Sanctifying faith is passive, not active, not trying, but trusting. We must not be activists who cry, "Oh no! It's all up to me!" or passivists who "let go and let God." How do we keep this all in balance? We become *fervent activists* who expend thousands of spiritual calories every day—*believing*. That brings us to the perpetual nature of sanctifying faith.

b) It is *perpetual*, not temporary

"I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing" (Jn. 15:5).

In his *Fourfold State of Man* (1720), the Marrowman, Thomas Boston said that our faith must be active and ongoing if we are to grow. He used the figure of a tree: "Christians do not grow at all times," he said, "they have their 'winters'" (1964, 299). How do one's winters turn to spring time again? He leaves the reader hanging. Then he changed the metaphor—to the pipes that conveyed oil to the perpetual candlesticks in the temple:

It is by faith the believer derives gracious influences from Jesus Christ, as each lamp in the candlestick received oil from the bowl, by the pipe going between them (Zech. 4:2) Now if that pipe be stopped, *if the saint's faith lie dormant and inactive, then all the rest of the graces will become dim, and seem ready to be extinguished. In consequence whereof, depraved nature will gather strength and become active.* What then will become of the soul? Why there is still one sure ground of hope. The saint's faith is not as the hypocrite's, like a pipe laid short of the foundation, whereby there can be no conveyance: it still remains a bond of union between Christ and the soul; and therefore, because Christ lives, the believer shall live also (John 14:19) (Boston 1964, 299).

To get the tree growing, and to keep the fire burning we exercise faith in Christ—*again!* If we do not go to Christ, then what? We open the cage and let the monster loose—what Forsyth called the “dark, wild, elemental nature at our base. . . which is like steam under pressure” (1899, 14). The monster (our flesh) hurts people, and has no interest in the glory of God.

Herman Ridderbos agrees with Haldane. Here, in his very Dutch way (and possibly hampered by his translator), he comments on Paul's “put to death,” “put off” and “put on” instructions in Colossians 3 (“mortification” and “vivification,” in Puritan parlance):

The putting off of the old man and the putting on of the new is. . . *a choice of faith*. . . but is also intended to be carried on as a continuous renewal, *a repeated “putting on the Lord Jesus Christ”* in the concrete existence of believers (cf. Col. 3:10; Rom. 13:14). The new life consists not only in having once been raised with Christ and in having been placed under a new rule, *but also in being renewed day to day* (2 Cor. 4:16) (Ridderbos 1975, 224, emphasis mine).

Ridderbos knew about the monster too. He says, “where faith slackens, the situation of Romans 7 becomes actual once again” (1975, 257).

c) It is *prayerful* in its daily practice In one sense, sanctifying faith doesn't pray; it *is* prayer. Our faith is rooted in an intellectual apprehension of the facts of the Gospel, but it is much more than that. It consciously communes with the God of the Gospel. Prayer is the language of sonship, or as James Montgomery said, “the Christians vital breath, his native air” (*Worship* 1965, 387, vs. 3). Faith *as* prayer oxygenates our spiritual muscles and propels us

into obedience. Faith has us fix our eyes on Christ (looking is praying), converse with our Abba, and “listen” for the Spirit’s urgings to love. Prayerfulness is not a merit badge to be earned. It is our life. When we are confident in our Father’s love (faith), we pray (worship). When we stand in the crucible of need, we pray (petition). We pray for ourselves, our families, church families, nations and the world. Orphans are content to drink dust from the broken cistern of self. They try to fix everything, and Paul’s admonition to “pray without ceasing” baffles them (1 Thess. 5:17). Forsyth said prayer “is the inmost energy of faith. . . . faith’s habit of heart. . . work goes to this tune. . . everything rises to God’s throne . . . everything the child does has a reference to the father, direct or indirect” (1899, 142).

d) It sanctifies in proportion to its exercise Faith is the instrumental means of sanctification; ongoing faith is the instrument of ongoing sanctification, and more, our growth progresses in proportion to our faith. Paul writes in Romans 8:13: “*For if you live according to the sinful nature, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live.*” This verse comes just before the classic “sonship” declaration in 8:15. Note that the verse says nothing directly about faith. Haldane understood that the Holy Spirit does not bless us with the power “put to death the misdeeds of the body” in a vacuum. His commentary on this verse centers on the fact that our sanctification progresses in direct proportion to the exercise of our faith. He said:

Believers obtain sanctification by the Spirit through the truth. Their sanctification, then, must be in proportion as the truth is understood and believed. *It is through faith in Christ, Acts 26:18; and if so, according to the degree of faith will be the degree of sanctification.* But all Christians are not equal in faith, neither, then, are they equal in sanctification; and as a Christian advances in faith, he advances in sanctification. If he may say, “Lord, increase my faith,” he may likewise say, “Lord, increase my sanctification.” He receives the Holy Spirit only in a measure. . . he ought, therefore, to pray for a larger measure of influence and grace from Him. . . .” They who have already put on Christ as their sanctifier, are still exhorted to put Him on—that is, more and more—Rom. 12:14. There are babes in Christ, there are little children, and young men, and fathers—I Cor. 3:1; 1 Jn. 2:12 (Haldane n.d., 350).

Louis Berkhof ends his section on the *Ordo Salutis*, the subsection on sanctification, saying:

It deserves particular attention that, while even the weakest faith mediates a perfect justification, *the degree of sanctification is commensurate with the strength of the Christian's faith and the persistence with which he apprehends Christ.*" (Berkhof 1941, 537, emphasis mine)

e) It is marked by *pain* (of self-understanding and self-disclosure in repentance)

The Apostle Paul blazed a trail we all need to follow—from proud Pharisee, to penitent publican. Romans 7 is marked by pain, the pain of self-realization: "The Flesh Monster" never changes character. Knox Chamblin, professor of New Testament at Reformed Theological Seminary (Jackson, MS), has written a uniquely insightful book, *Paul & the Self: Apostolic Teaching for Personal Wholeness*. Chamblin, says he has found in Paul a "fellow struggler" who has been "my pastor and my doctor, my teacher and my therapist. In my struggle toward maturity and authenticity, nothing has helped me so much as Paul's letters" (1993, 12). What attracted Chamblin, and attracts (and frightens) us, is Paul's personal honesty—in particular about his own battles against sin. The self-protective bent of many "professional Christians" is shown in their inability to read about Paul's struggles and admit to themselves and others that they share them. Chamblin says that Paul's confession of his *agon* (agony) was genuine—not the broodings of some "*self-intoxicated navel-gazer*. *His talk about himself is remarkably disinterested. He boasts not of himself but of Christ (1 Cor. 1:29-31) and other people (1 Thess. 2:19,20)*" (1993, 23).

That is the key: self-disinterest instead of self-absorption—what Luther called, the *curvitas*, the curved-inwardness of sin. Until we are consciously "co-crucified with Christ" (Gal. 2:20), we will continue in the business of self-protection, terrified that we might be exposed as sinners. We listed two aspects of the pain of growth for a reason: the pain of self-understanding (seeing our sin) *must* be followed by the pain of self-disclosure—repentance to God, and owning up to both our sinfulness and our specific sins to others. We doubt that

the former is really complete or really honest without the latter. But where can we find the power to be “big repenters?” By looking at Christ! In her autobiography, *From Fear to Freedom*, Rose Marie Miller (widow of Dr. Jack Miller) recalls the time that, as a Christian, the full implications of the Cross hit her. She tells of the tears of relief that came when the wonder of God’s grace dawned on her—that in the Cross, we are at once “*totally criticized and completely forgiven!*” (1994, 73). Think about it: when we have undergone the ultimate criticism of the Cross of Christ, what more or what worse can be said about us? Looking at the Looking at the Cross and at the now-risen Christ who died on it, we can have the courage to be open with others about our sinfulness in general and our sins in particular. But, more on that in chapter seven, “Praxis,” and in the *SONSHIP for Africa* course itself (especially S-16).

One might think that growth in grace would be accompanied by great peace and joy. It is—but in a cyclical matrix of joy, sin, pain, repentance, cleansing, and the restoration of joy. The sinning comes naturally, and brings with it consequential pain—the inevitable broken relationship and with God (he doesn’t leave, we do), others, and our new self. But, like a toothache that propels us to the dentist, the pain of sin drives us to Christ in repentance. From repentance comes cleansing—not for justification, but for freedom from the power of sin and the cleansing of the conscience. From cleansing comes joy, and as we note in *SONSHIP for Africa*, evangelism (page S10-10 on Ps. 51, and 51; S16-16 on “Weakness Evangelism”). Wonderfully, the “bigger sinners” we become (by seeing our sin), the bigger Jesus becomes. Jesus stung Simon the Pharisee with that principle, “*He who is forgiven little, loves little; and he who is forgiven much, loves much*” (Lk. 7:47). If there is any “great secret” for loving other sinners it is this: we experience the pain of seeing our own sin—sin for which Jesus must continually intercede. As we do, we become “bigger sinners” with a Big Christ, and others mysteriously become “smaller sinners”—and consequently much easier to love (This is Jesus’ “log vs. speck” principle from Matthew 7:3–5.) Try “looking at Christ” the

next time you are in a meeting and someone makes you angry. Looking at Christ is powerful! It produces the “pleasurable pain” of repentance and can put self-righteousness to death in an instant. Those are the two ways of the two hearts—the publican’s and the Pharisee’s.

Overarching all these principles and practice is one grand theme, the ultimate purpose of our holiness: the glory of God. One of the more common flaws in our thinking about sanctification is that our whole motivation for seeking it is egocentric. That is, we are ashamed of failure, not because we fail God, but because we look and feel bad when we fail. Our whole psyche is bent toward achieving rather than giving. We tend to think of sanctification as “getting better” and “feeling better about ourselves”—both of which are me-centered. Holiness is loving God and others—others-centered. As sons of Adam and daughters of Eve, we already have a problem with self-centeredness. When we embrace a theology of sanctification by law, we exacerbate the problem. Now our very religion reinforces our preoccupation with self, and what’s worse, the fact that we really are striving for something good can mask the fact that our striving is more about making ourselves pure for our own sake than for Jesus’ sake. But the Holy Spirit is not the least-bit interested in propping up our strength so that we can look good to others; he is eminently interested in filling us with power so that we can make God look good to them. “*Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works, and glorify [who?] your Father in heaven*” (Matt. 5:16).

The Obedience of Faith: Summary

What can change us? Faith in ourselves cannot change us, and it is just as certain that faith in a “small Christ” cannot change us either. But, faith in a Mighty Christ, a Great High Priest who sits at the right-hand of the Father to make intercession for us, *can* change us. He is not on duty there as optional window dressing—as a physician stands by “on call” in the unlikely event of some great emergency. When we begin to see ourselves as needy sinner-sons, people who desperately need for Christ to continue his labor on our behalf—patiently

and tirelessly clothing us in his perfect righteousness, we will be remain sufficiently needy to keep believing the Gospel. We are that bad and that loved, and keeping *that* before us—our need and his grace—is the immediate means, the instrumental cause of our sanctification. Faith is the way we grow in holiness because faith is the way we lay-hold of Christ.

But ~~when will we grow in holiness?~~ We will grow in holiness when in the midst of a temptation to sin, or when we are ensnared in sin, with the cry of *Abba—Father!* we run to the Throne for help. When we are at our worst, when all those things that are the very antithesis of the character of Christ well up within our hearts—pride, envy, lying, hatred, lust, love of reputation, love of the praise of men—that is when we can and must run to Christ, cry out to him for cleansing, and “clothe ourselves” again in his perfect righteousness.

As pants the hart for cooling streams when heated in the chase,
so longs my soul, O God, for thee, and thy refreshing grace.
Why restless, why cast down, my soul? Trust God, and he'll employ
his aid for thee, and change these sighs to thankful hymns of joy.
— Psalm 42:1 (*Trinity* 1990, 661 vs. 1,4)

It is precisely *then* that new life will flow into us from the Holy Spirit; sin will be delivered a crushing blow, and love will flow from our lives to others. Haltingly? Yes. Imperfectly? Always. But it will flow. The good pleasure of the Holy Spirit is to bless faith in Jesus with his first-fruit of love—love, the chief grace from which all the others flow: joy, peace, patience, kindness, gentleness, faithfulness, goodness, and self-control. That is what Christlikeness is, and that is how we have it—by faith.

Faith in Christ → The Holy Spirit → The Obedience of Faith Working by Love

*When I stand before the throne, dressed in beauty not my own;
When I see thee as thou art, love thee with unsinning heart.
Then, Lord shall I fully know, not till then, how much I owe.*
(*Trinity* 1990, McCheyne, dated 1837).

CHAPTER 6

THE GALATIAN CONTROVERSY

The Relationship of Faith and the Spirit for Sanctification: Part 2

You foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? – Galatians 3:1

Introduction

To label this a “controversy,” understates the case. It was a pitched battle for the Gospel in which two Apostolic Titans clashed. That *Apostles* were warring one another, suggests we are dealing with complex doctrinal issues with ominous implications. Indeed, this was a theological firestorm that threatened to engulf and destroy the church.

The fundamental questions had to do with how are we justified, and how are we sanctified, but interwoven were divergent opinions about the law, grace, faith, and the operation of the Holy Spirit. Presently, we will ask a series of questions to clarify the issues, and afterward, do our best to answer them.

Our primary interest is not in justification, but in sanctification and its instrumental means. Whenever holiness is discussed, there are some things we rarely get confused about—“non-negotiables,” if you will. They are: that Christ is the object of our faith; that Christlikeness is the essence of sanctification; and that the Holy Spirit is the Agent of sanctification. It is in this other matter of how faith is connected to ongoing sanctification that we most often lose our way. When the question is asked: “How does God *keep giving* us the Spirit?,” we enter into *the heart of the heart* of sanctification. Paul exclaimed, “Great is the mystery of godliness!” (I Tim. 3:16). Indeed it is, and the Galatian situation teaches us the danger of assuming that

our carnal minds can solve the mystery. Paul understood the essentials very well, and, in his letter to the troubled Galatian churches, he opens them up to us.

Our key passage is Galatians 3:1–5, a text that simultaneously lays open the heart of the Galatian heresy, and, what is frequently overlooked,¹ provides us with the clearest expositions in the Scriptures, of faith as the means of sanctification.

You foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? Before your very eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed as crucified. ²I would like to learn just one thing from you: Did you receive the Spirit by observing the law, or by believing what you heard? ³ Are you so foolish? After beginning with the Spirit, are you now trying to attain your goal by human effort? ⁴Have you suffered so much for nothing—if it really was for nothing? ⁵Does God give you his Spirit and work miracles among you because you observe the law, or because you believe what you heard? (Galatians 3:1-5).

This is a frightening picture. On his first missionary journey, Paul had planted churches in the cities of Antioch (in Psidia, not Syria), Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe, all in the general area of Roman “Galatia.” Now they were in grave danger. A band of Christian Jews from Jerusalem, men “from James” (2:12), had shadowed Paul’s work., traveling the 800 kilometers (500 miles) from their home to visit each one of his new churches. We call them Judaizers,” because their purpose was to force Gentile Christians to keep Jewish laws. They were well-intentioned lovers of Christ, *and* lovers of the law. Donald Guthrie writes that:

They had seen the law (the Old Testament) as pointing to the claims of Christ. The testimony of the law had been an important part of their Christian experience. It was difficult for them to reconcile this with any Christian groups who were not carrying out the precepts of the law (NTT 1981, 687–88).

What Guthrie means is that these were sincere people. They were not intentionally evil; they had the best interests of the Galatians at heart. But sincerity is no measure of truth; the

¹ For seven years to date (1998) we have routinely checked Christian books for any treatment of the Galatians 3:1-5 passage, particularly regarding its implications for sanctification by faith. These are rarely noticed as most authors are preoccupied with the epistles’ more obvious issue—the means of justification.

results were disastrous—the Gospel was compromised. This explains Paul’s uncharacteristic vehemence toward these people he loved and had personally led to Christ. He called them “foolish.”² F. F. Bruce puts it well. Paul, he says, wrote to them with “white hot urgency” (Bruce 1979, 304). Why this Apostolic outrage? It was because their confusion wasn’t over some petty point-of-a-sub-point of theology. Their souls were in peril!

In his letter, after the briefest possible introduction, he hit them with the accusation that they were in the process of apostatizing! *“I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you by the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel—which is really no gospel at all!”* (1:6, 7) Later, he reminds them that before their very eyes he had vividly *“portrayed Christ crucified”* for them, but adds that now, they are forsaking Christ! (3:1) In the fourth chapter, he says, *“I fear for you, that somehow I have wasted my efforts on you!”* (4:11). Chapter five has the chilling, *“Mark my words! I, Paul, tell you that if you let yourselves be circumcised, Christ will be of no value to you at all. . . . You who are trying to be justified by law have been alienated from Christ; you have fallen away from grace”* (5:2, 4). Still, he calls them “my brothers” (5:13), but the message is clear—and loud: you can’t have it both ways; you trust in Christ and are saved, or trust in the law and are damned. Serious charges! Serious business.

Galatians 3:1–5 is a complex passage, so, to reap its rewards, we will need to “mine it” for hidden gems. Four issues need investigation: **A.** What was the *means* by which the Galatians received the Holy Spirit initially, and, how could they expect to receive him in an ongoing way? **B.** What *type* of “law” does Paul chide them for trusting in, and what

² Ὁ ἀνόητος Γαλάται— *“You foolish Galatians!”*—Paul’s opening salvo in chapter 3 is shocking enough, but he had much less kind words at his command, most notably the μωραῖνω (*moraino*, fools) from which we get our word “moron”—the word he used in Romans 1:22 “professing themselves wise; they became fools.” As it was, he chose the word used to translate Jesus’ Emmaus Road reproof, “O foolish ones and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken. . .” – Lk. 24:24. (KA26, *passim*)

implications does that hold? (vs. 2, 5) **C.** Related to that, what was the *motive* behind the Judaizers teaching and the Galatians obedience to their teaching, i.e., in their minds, was this an issue of justification or sanctification? **D.** What was the impact of the Galatian heresy on their individual lives and the body-life of the congregations involved?

We will intersperse our analysis with personal application to keep our study from being overly technical, and conclude with a look the chief lessons of the controversy for our personal faith and the life and ministry of the church today. Chapter 7 will continue that theme with practical examples of how to teach, preach and live consistently on the basis that sanctification is by faith. The *SONSHIP for Africa* course (Part II) is a working tool to aid pastors, teachers, disciplers and parents in discipling others in a life of faith.

A. The Initial and Continual Means of Receiving the Holy Spirit

By what means did the Galatians first receive the Holy Spirit, and how would they keep receiving him in the future? Fredrick Dale Bruner, a neo-Pentecostal theologian, notes that there were “two competitive means of the Spirit in Galatia—the doing of the law, and the message of faith” which Paul considered to be mutually exclusive” (1970, 237). He observes, rightly, we believe, that the Judaizers held to the doctrine of justification by faith for *initial* salvation. However, they taught that there was “another fuller gospel” which demanded that “faith should be supplemented by fuller obedience to God’s will.” God would honor that extra obedience, then, with “a fuller gift of his Spirit. . .” (1970, 237) The literal translation of 5:2b is: “*Out of works of law the Spirit you received, or out of the hearing of faith?*” [ἐξ ἔργων νόμου τοῦ πνεύμα ἐλάβετε ἢ ἐξ ἀκοῆς πίστεως]. The phrase, “hearing of faith” [ἀκοῆς πίστεως, a “faith-hearing”] is key. Paul’s question is not for information, but in the tone of a parental, “*Didn’t I tell you to clean up your room an hour ago?*” — “*Didn’t you receive the Holy Spirit by faith in the Gospel? Now, after beginning with the Spirit, are you trying to attain your goal by human effort?*” (vs.3) Kenneth Weust

translates verses three and five this way: "*Are you so unreflecting? Having begun by means of the Spirit, now are you being brought to maturity by the flesh?*" (Wuest 1973, 86). How did they receive the Spirit? By the Gospel. What is the Gospel, and what was the response that gave them the Spirit? Paul gives us the Gospel in synopsis:

Now, brothers, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. . . For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures. . . (1 Cor. 15:1–4).

That is the Gospel—the death and resurrection of Christ for sinners. What did the Galatians do with it? They believed it! How? [1] They agreed with God's judgment against their sin (they took sides with God against themselves). [2] They fled with their sins to Christ for mercy, and by faith, laid their sins on him. That was all. There was no lawkeeping, only faith in Christ. The result was that by that faith in Christ, they received the promised Holy Spirit and began their new life by "the obedience that comes from faith" (Rom. 1:5). That's what happened, and that is how they were living . . . until the Judaizers arrived with "the rest of the story." Now Paul is demanding,

I will ask you one simple question: did you receive the Spirit of God by trying to keep the Law or by believing the message of the Gospel? Surely you can't be so idiotic as to think that a man begins his spiritual life in the Spirit and then completes it by reverting to outward observances?" (5:2, 3, Phillips)

Paul is saying, "Just how many ways do you think there are to receive the Holy Spirit?" Thus: "Does God keep giving you [ἐπιχορηγῶν, present participle] his Spirit and keep working [ἐνεργῶν, pres. part.] wonders [δύναμις – *dunamis*, Eng. "dynamite"] among you because you observe the law, or because you believe what you heard [lit. "the hearing of faith?"].

What used to baffle us about this passage (as we struggled to sanctify ourselves by works of piety and works of ministry) was this: why, after mentioning justification, did Paul

mention the Spirit? We couldn't see that justification and sanctification are so interrelated that if you hit one, the other cries out in pain. When we defined our terms in chapter one, we noted how these two blessings are different: justification is legal, and sanctification is moral. Justification is a one-time act, and sanctification is an ongoing process. Otherwise, the action of each (faith) and the objective content of that faith (the work of Christ) are exactly the same.

G. C. Berkouwer, we noted earlier, cautions against "staging" the Christian life by creating an artificial division between the experience of justification and sanctification, and then building a false theology of growth to bridge them (p. 119). Bruner warns against the same. Wesleyan perfectionism, "higher-life," or "victorious life" teaching, and Pentecostalism all attempt this, each with its own twist. The Galatians had been led to do the same. With the "justification by faith stage" done with, the Judaizers had put them on the hard road of sanctification by works. Berkouwer says:

The history of the church and of theology. . . throws into sharp relief the dove-tailed interconnection between justification and sanctification. Engage in a controversy concerning the one, and presently you are talking about the other. In this controversy one accuses the other of allowing justification to be assimilated into sanctification, only to be told that he, on the other hand, through his preoccupation with justification, crowds out sanctification. It is no wonder at all that in our time, ever since justification returned to the arena of theological debate, sanctification was at its heels. (1952, 9)

In a flash, Berkouwer has explained away our confusion over Paul's wild shifts between these two doctrines, by saying that if we had really understood them, we would never have been confused in the first place. We are appropriately humbled.

Herman Hoeksema's *Reformed Dogmatics* includes the usual section on sanctification, but it is long on law and duty and short on faith and love. He does, however remind us of one of the historic emphases in the [Puritan] Reformed tradition of "*the necessity of a daily and continual conversion to God. . .*" "Daily conversion" does not, of course, mean

re-justification, but conversion in the sense that we all constantly need to be “re-converting” from trust in self to faith in Christ. Law is familiar, and deadly; grace is alien, and vivifying. Like the Galatians, we are “prone to wander” (don’t you feel it?) from Christ. We can live for days without *emotionally connecting with the objective fact* of God’s love for us in the Gospel. Richard Lovelace refers to this as “spiritual amnesia” (1985, 68). Then, suddenly, graciously, God brings us back to our spiritual senses, perhaps by using some *external* means of grace like a verse of Scripture, a hymn, a sermonic reminder or a trial. Those are dry and fruitless days, duty days—“just doing what is right because it’s right,” days. (I can hear the objection of my seminarians now: “*But it is better to obey out of duty than to disobey!*”) It is also “better” to steal than to murder, so to set duty over against disobedience is a false antithesis, a pathetic attempt to rationalize a cold heart. We all have “duty days,” but they are things to be repented of, not boasted in. Jesus longs for our obedience to issue from conscious union and communion with him. *That* is what he wanted from the Galatians, and it was the very thing they were not giving. They were trusting in their dutiful works to try to extract more love and more of the Spirit from him, a love and Spirit that were already theirs in abundance by faith. But for his forbearing love, our lovelessness we would surely force “*Oh ye of little faith...*” from his lips a hundred times in a day. So, the answer to (a) is clear: the Galatians received the Holy Spirit by faith initially, and if they hoped to keep receiving him for ongoing sanctification, faith in Christ crucified, the same faith they exercised for justification, was the only way it would happen. The same holds true for us.

B. The Type of Law Being Trusted: Implications

In what type of law were the Galatians trusting, and what are the implications? This is a difficult question that raises a number of thorny issues. Paul chastises them for relying on “law” (vss. 2, 5). What law, and why is that an issue? For us, it isn’t an issue, but some teachers think and teach (as we once thought and taught) that the Galatian heresy

involved trust in the *ceremonial law for justification*, and had nothing whatsoever to do with sanctification. If that is true, then if we believe in *Sola Fide* for justification, the heresy does not concern us at all. Hopefully, Berkouwer's repeated admonitions have put us on guard against that sort of thinking. Without a doubt, for the Galatians, the problem was trust in the *ceremonial law*. The men in the Galatian churches were submitting to circumcision, and the congregations were "observing special days and seasons and years" (the Jewish calendar 4:10). That is an effortless observation, and if we stop there, we miss the deeper issues involved.

What we are suggesting is that the *type* of law Paul is speaking against is irrelevant. *Trust* in law is the issue here. What if, for instance, the Galatians had been trusting in the ceremonial law *for sanctification*, what then? If that were the case (and this is the view we will set forth), then the Galatian heresy has volumes to say to the contemporary Christian church! Christian legalism is, by definition, a focus on law *as* law, and, trusting in it for sanctification before God. That is why we have suggested that the *type* of law trusted in is inconsequential.

If our suggestion is troubling or confusing, this question should clarify the matter: would the reader care to suggest *some other type of law* than the ceremonial law, in which we might legitimately trust in order to commend ourselves to God? What if we were to trust in the moral law, or Pharisaic accretions to the moral law, or an altogether different set of manmade laws to commend us to him? (The latter is our biggest problem in Africa.¹) *It does not matter* what kind of law we talk about, because for the Christian, the sole ground of our justification is the blood and righteousness of Christ. *And*, the sole ground for our sanctifica-

¹ Here in Africa we have laws: laws for things and laws against things. Laws against: the keeping of dogs, or wearing makeup, or bell-bottom trousers, or jewelry, or trimming the hair in certain ways, or braiding the hair, or eating beef or pork, or using wine moderately (or in communion). We have laws requiring: that you greet Christians in certain ways with words such as "*I am Samuel, and I am saved!*" Greet that way or your profession of faith is suspect! Or you must wear certain types of robes—white robes, or white robes with turbans, all of which mark you as having been "washed white in the blood of the Lamb." The items we have listed are typical, and only a fraction of the total—a constantly increasing total.

tion is the blood and righteousness of Christ. As Shaw said: The *meritorious* cause of our sanctification is the blood and righteousness of Christ [not our obedience to any type of law]; the *efficient* cause is the Holy Spirit; the *instrumental* cause is faith in Christ; and, the *external means* are the word, the sacraments, prayer, God's providences, etc. Shaw has done us a great service: he keeps us sane in the whirlwind.

Any law, no matter whose, even God's, that interposes itself between the believer and Christ is foolishness and death. Hendricksen puts it this way: "a Christ supplemented is a Christ supplanted" (68, 112). We recall that one of the core issues in the Marrow Controversy was that ministers were being required to affirm and preach to others the necessity of works of repentance *for justification* (see ch. 4 pp. 105ff.).

C. The Question of Motive in the Heresy: Implications

What was the purpose of the teaching of the Judaizers, and the obedience of the Galatians to it, i.e., was the issue justification, sanctification, or both? Paul says in 5:4, "You who are trying to be justified by law have been alienated from Christ; you have fallen away from grace." That settles that question, but raises another: What did the Judaizers and the Galatians *think* they were doing? In other words, was Paul's accusation based on a deduction drawn from his understanding of the indivisible linkage of justification and sanctification, or, was their real intent to save themselves—or to save themselves again, or save themselves more completely. What were they *trying* to do?

There is yet another question: did the *Judaizers* think they were accomplishing one thing by forcing the Galatians to comply with the law (their justification, for instance), while the *Galatians* who followed them thought they were accomplishing quite a different thing (their sanctification, perhaps)? The matter is not at all clear, and we can hear Berkouwer whispering cautions in our ear—"Engage in a controversy concerning the one, and presently you are talking about the other" (1952, 9).

It appears the problem was this: the Judaizers *and* the Galatians were attempting something that on the surface, seemed quite benign. They were keeping a vestigial portion of the ceremonial law—but nothing related to blood atonement, since Jesus had clearly accomplished that—so that they could become *just a degree more holy*, more safe from sin, and therefore more pleasing to God—ostensibly a matter of sanctification, but by law. We believe we can prove this, or come close to proving, that the whole affair was unconscious, not conscious apostasy. But, in the end, their motive was as irrelevant as the type of law they tried to keep. Both of those things mattered to them, of course, and we are quite sure they were horrified when Paul wrote to accuse them of heresy. This much is certain: if we are correct in our view, that this controversy concerns the nature of sanctification as well as justification, the implications for those of us who are self-satisfied just because we hold to justification by faith, are staggering. What do others have to say about the Galatian controversy?

F. F. Bruce describes how the internal squabbles among first-century Jewish Christians about the value of the ceremonial law, inevitably drew Gentile believers into the wrangle. (Bruce 1979, 297–304). He notes that some leaders like Peter, “James the Just” (the Lord’s brother), and others, had acquiesced to the Divine evidence of Cornelius’ conversion and reception of the Spirit, so they knew full well that circumcision was not necessary for salvation or the reception of the Spirit (Acts 11:18). But there was another group. Acts 15 tells that men from Jerusalem, some of them converted Pharisees (15:5), traveled to Antioch (of Syria, not Galatia), and were saying, “*Unless you are circumcised according to the custom taught by Moses, you cannot be saved*” (15:1). This appalling assertion precipitated the Jerusalem Council. [The full text of Acts 15 may be found as Part I, APPENDIX I.]

Why this zeal for the law? For one thing, some Jewish Christians understood their faith solely in terms of Messianic Judaism. It followed, then, that for Gentiles to be saved,

they would have to come into the Kingdom the way Gentile proselytes always had—by circumcision. What's more, it suddenly dawned on the Jewish Christian church, that a time was rapidly approaching when there would be more Gentile Christians than Jewish ones! About this they were justifiably concerned—given Gentile Roman morality (Bruce 1979, 297–304 *passim*).

It was in this climate of near-panic over a potential moral breakdown in the church, that the bright idea of sending out Judaizing missionaries was born. It seemed like a workable solution. Even from the scant evidence we have, we can discern three distinct types of Judaizers and four divergent opinions: [1] the Acts 15:1 type: justification requires compliance. [2] A more moderate type: sanctification after justification requires compliance (for God to be fully satisfied). [3] An even more moderate type: membership in the church requires compliance (i.e., these are our scruples, not God's). And, [4] A liberal group: We don't care; you are free in Christ. And, that brings us to the question: *which ones* were our villains in Galatia? We know they were "men from James"⁴ (2:12), and that being the case, unless they grossly overstepped the bounds of their commission, it is highly unlikely they were requiring circumcision for *salvation*.

Our view is this: the *intent* of this particular group of Galatian Judaizers was to sanctify Paul's converts, not save them, but the *effect* of their teaching was the compromise of the core truth of the Gospel—faith alone, in the righteousness of Christ alone. Thus Paul's labeling them "false brothers" (ψευδαδελφους) in 2:4 (cf. II Cor. 11:26).

⁴ Notes on the identity of the "James" of Gal. 2:2; the Jerusalem Council; and the dating of Galatians: 1. D. Guthrie affirms that James, the half-brother of Jesus is the author of James (*New Testament Introduction*, vol. 3, p. 82). 2. Simon Kistemaker, in his *New Testament Commentary*, "James & John" (pp. 7, 8, 28) identifies the Lord's brother as the author of James, "the leader of the Jerusalem church," and the "James" of Gal. 2:2. Calvin insisted the culprit was James the son of Alphaeus. *Galatians*, p. 59, 60.) 3. D. Guthrie dates Galatians at about AD 49—before the Jerusalem Council of Acts 15 and notes that James, the Lord's brother was a major spokesman in that meeting and played a vital part in formulating its landmark decision regarding the role of the ceremonial law in the life of the Church (NTI, vol. 2, 75–83 *passim*).

If we seem to be trying to blunt the force of Paul's accusation in 5:4 (*"you who are trying to be justified by law"*), consider this sobering question: which two church leaders—writer of three books in our New Testament canon—were either indirectly implicated in the development and spread of this heresy, or were up to eye-level in it? We already have one name, James, the Lord's brother who sponsored the whole operation. (Though some commentators deny he had any direct role, e.g. Machen 1931, 124.) What about the other man? We discover his identity in the altercation Paul records in Galatians 2:11–16:

When Peter came to Antioch [Syria], I opposed him to his face, because he was clearly in the wrong. ¹² Before certain men came from *James*, he used to eat with the Gentiles. But when they arrived, he began to draw back and separate himself from the Gentiles because he was afraid of those who belonged to the circumcision group. ¹³ The other Jews joined him in his hypocrisy, so that by their hypocrisy even Barnabas was led astray. ¹⁴ When I saw that *they were not acting in line with the truth of the gospel*, I said to Peter in front of them all, "You are a Jew, yet you live like a Gentile and not like a Jew. How is it, then, that you force Gentiles to follow Jewish customs?" ¹⁵ "We who are Jews by birth and not 'Gentile sinners' ¹⁶ know that a man is not justified by observing the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ. So we, too, have put our faith in Christ Jesus that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by observing the law, because by observing the law no one will be justified (Gal. 2:11–16, emphasis mine).

Peter? It is almost inconceivable that such a thing could have happened in the age of the Gospel! (How sad that Rome followed him in this, but not in other matters.) How could it be that two Biblical authors, one an Apostle, the other, the half-brother of Jesus, the undisputed leader of the Jerusalem church, and its most eminent spokesman were involved in this damnable heresy? "Even Barnabas," Paul's missionary companion "was led astray." (The "even" suggests that this was completely out of character for him.) Worse, these were shepherds of souls who were leading the sheep *away* from Christ, Culture. We are blind to the sins of our culture. We don't sense the contaminants in our own fish tank. What they did was not shocking to them at all; it was the most natural thing in the world. Apostles are sinners too. Let it humble us. If these men were capable of this unconscious apostasy, what

might we be capable of? What exactly, did Peter do, why did he do it, and what was the harm in it? Did Paul overreact?

Peter: A Case Study in Sanctification by Works Peter snubbed Gentile believers at a church supper—perhaps several. This occurred north of Jerusalem in Antioch of Syria, Paul's missionary home-base, where Peter was residing at the time. This, you will recall, was well after the conversion of Cornelius and Peter's defense of his inclusion in the church to the elders in Jerusalem (Acts 11). Then, Peter took sides with the Judaizing party, the very men he had taken to task for questioning the validity of Cornelius' conversion. After his "vision of the sheet" (Acts 10), Peter had enjoyed free fellowship with Gentiles. He had entered their homes (which some Jewish Christians would not do), took meals with them, and accepted them into his heart, a liberated man. Then, apparently at a church social function, he turned his back on these Christian brothers, and sat at the "reserved table" with the legalistic groupies, the Judaizers and their Gentile "converts" who had adopted this *new code of conduct*. Fear—again ("and Peter sank beneath the waves. . .").

This is a good lesson regarding the struggle against "pet sins," and our ongoing sanctification. Why did Peter succumb to fear, and why was it so serious? This is a point we must not miss, because it has far-reaching implications for our lives as well: Peter succumbed to fear because he was looking at the people's faces, not the face of Christ—again ("before the cock crows twice, you will deny me thrice"). What do we mean? Let us phrase his problem this way: Peter was not resting in the righteousness of Christ for him. Put another way, Peter forgot the intercessory work of his Great High Priest who was tirelessly "making him beautiful." Put another way, Peter forgot that the ground of his justification and the ground of his sanctification were the same: the finished work of Christ. Perhaps he understood the principle that sanctification is by faith in Christ, and this was just a slip-up. In any case, he didn't practice the principle, and that was why he got deeply entangled in this affair.

If this still sounds vague, let us explain further: If Peter had been “consciously clothed” in the righteousness of Christ, he would not have needed the “righteousness” (approval) of the Judaizers. As it was, he sat with the “in-group” because they made him feel loved. . . accepted . . . righteous—the very things Christ was offering him *at that moment* in heaven. Peter was looking at the wrong thing (Heb. 7:25; 12:2).

As for us, once we get hold of this principle, we will begin to perceive the thought process behind our loveless words and actions that grieve God and hurt others. We will see how our craving to be loved, accepted, well-thought-of, in-control, and right or righteous people is sin, and how we expressed it as sin. As we teach in *SONSHIP for Africa*, our lives are often like one long “dance for righteousness” but the only place we can find true righteousness is in Jesus Christ and at his expense. All other righteousness will be false and at someone else’s expense. Until we get hold of this principle and train ourselves in becoming conscious—daily—of *where we are getting our righteousness*, the motives for our sinful behavior patterns will remain hidden from us. But, wonderfully, along with the painful realization of why we sin can come the ability to repent of it—at the root level. Struggling at the fruit-level (trying not to be afraid of people, for instance) will only make us more afraid. It is being aware of our sin *and* of who we are in Christ—dearly loved sons of the Father—that gives us the will to repent and the power to live to the glory of God.

What did Berkouwer say? Our “sonship is in contrast with the righteousness of works. . . the secret of this sonship lies in the acknowledgment of grace. *All progress in sanctification moves within the boundaries of being sons of the Father* (1952, 112). That is what Peter forgot; that is what we so easily forget; that is where the real battle is every day—growing in a conscious awareness of who we really are—sons. Christlike behavior grows out of our conscious sonship. Sons are satisfied with Christ’s righteousness; they depend on it, rest in it, appropriate it when they are faced with a temptation like Peter’s to fear men. Without it, like Peter, we will be ready to settle for any form of righteousness that comes

our way—at a church supper. Our faith in Christ for justification was just the starting point for a *continuum* of faith that gives us sanctification. It is faith in Christ the Holy Spirit responds to by giving us his fruit. Self-trust and self-righteousness are the antithesis of Gospel faith.

We have said it before: we don't believe for a moment there was any *intent* to pervert the Gospel—not by James, his Judaizers, or Peter. One could suppose that these men didn't understand justification by faith. That would be wrong. They did what we do—forget that Christ is the basis for our *sanctification*. As to the situation at the church supper, neither Peter nor Barnabas could see their own motives. They were only conscious of being afraid, but didn't perceive that it had anything to do with a failure to look to Christ. So, they allied themselves with the Judaizers, and that alliance compromised “the principle of the Gospel” on two counts: [1] it was a tacit approval of a false doctrine of works, and [2] their unconscious motive for “joining in the hypocrisy” was to get righteousness from men—itsself a denigration of the righteousness of Christ. That is why Paul in his letter to the Galatians, lumps Peter in with James and his Judaizers. Paul saw no material difference between the Judaizers' requirement of circumcision *for* Gentiles, and Peter's eating at a table *with* circumcised Gentiles. The two actions were, at heart, the same thing, and Paul condemned them both. Peter and James were acting like twins born of the same mother—Hagar, the slave woman (4:21–31).

John Calvin is hard on Peter, we think judging him too harshly. He fumes:

For the sake of the Jews, Peter had withdrawn himself from the Gentiles, *in order to drive them from the communion of the Church*, unless they would relinquish the liberty of the Gospel, and submit to the yoke of the Law (Calvin 1959, 63, emphasis mine).

Calvin, even at twenty-six (when he wrote his *Institutes*), was a seasoned veteran of doctrinal controversy, so language like that was his stock-in-trade. But if we consider ourselves “nice people,” we may feel compelled to react against Calvin by defending the great Apostle. After all, Peter only *sympathized* with those who held those views because

he was afraid of them—and nice people know that there is *nothing* meaner than a legalist. And poor Barnabas. . . after all, his ministry *was* encouragement. Such rationalizations didn't satisfy Paul. The glorious Gospel of Christ was at stake, and he went for Peter's throat. Reread the narrative of 2:11–16 (p. 148). None of us would have enjoyed being present at that meeting. It was not a happy time, though Peter seems to have taken the rebuke well and repented—a powerful testimony to the power of the Holy Spirit in him.

Berkouwer, in showing us the interrelatedness of justification and sanctification, has helped us see inside the Galatian heresy. It was a legalistic labyrinth in which you became so disoriented that the Gospel got lost, and you got lost from the Gospel. It was a hydra with many heads—from mandatory circumcision to good table manners. It was a breeding pool for self-righteousness in which everybody was drowning. It was, Paul said, “another gospel which is no gospel at all” (1:7)—bad news masquerading as good news. We began this section (3.) by asking a two-part question: what was the *motive* behind the Galatian heresy, and, which doctrine was at issue: justification or sanctification. We have demonstrated that the parties involved didn't really know what real motives were, because they were self-deceived. In addition, motive does not matter. No matter your purpose, add your merits onto the blood and righteousness of Christ, and the results are catastrophic. As for trying to pick which of the two doctrines was at issue, that is fruitless—just another of those “*which came first, the chicken or the egg*” debates which last forever, which nobody wins, and from which everyone goes home exhausted. If we had to take our pick, we would say that justification was most at risk, and the most dangerous to put at risk. But, the minute you think you have your justification right, and “go over to works” for sanctification, you threaten the foundation.

The Galatians were undermining the foundation, and Paul warned them that if they kept at it, they would forfeit the Gospel. For the record, we believe that unrepentant legalists are not Christians because they have never fully trusted Christ—the very thing Paul feared for the

Galatians. In the end, they repented because they truly belonged to Christ. The alternative would have been their facing rejection on the Day of Judgment crying, “Lord! Lord!...” (And note again the Hebraistic double name signifying intimacy.) Jesus bled and died to free us from serving God with the dutiful spirit of slaves. Our refusal to abandon that servile stance is an insult to the Cross. “*You are no longer a slave, but a son*” (Gal. 4:7).

D. The Fruits and Effects of the Heresy

We have dealt amply with the doctrinal fruits of the heresy, what about behavioral ones? Predictably, when the Galatians turned away from faith in the gift-righteousness of Christ for their right-standing before God, their sanctification failed because the Spirit indwelling them withdrew his power. Recalling our discussion of the “indwelling vs. filling” paradox, we know that he was still in their hearts, but his interest had shifted from empowering to disempowering and convicting. Consider what the “loss” of the Spirit means: the loss of his fruit, his assurance, a clean conscience before God (unless through presumption), and a return to the uncertainty of living under law. It is a not a nice place to live. (see Part I, APPENDIX K, ‘Law, Legalism and the Gospel’)

John Sanderson’s book, *The Fruit of the Spirit*, includes a chapter, “The Fruit and Others” —meaning *the* fruit (love), and others—joy, peace, patience, kindness, gentleness, meekness, goodness and self control. He argues convincingly that although “the fruit is one,” love is the *chief fruit* on which all the others depend, and, from which they all flow (Sanderson 1972, 142–43). If you love God and others, you are joyful, peaceful, patient, kind, etc. In Galatia, as in every place the heresy took root, unconditional *agape* had gone flying out the window, and conditional love (based on others’ performance) had flown in. How did the lack of love manifest itself? Peter’s behavior in Antioch (Syria) gives us a glimpse into the way legalism breeds in a congregational context.

Peter at the Table Think of it: Peter's fear of men drove faith in Christ from his heart. Both cannot live in the same heart; one will drive the other out. If Galatians 3:5 is correct, and it is, God "keeps giving" the Holy Spirit in response to our faith. When Peter's faith failed—when he stopped looking to Jesus as his righteousness—he had no love of the Spirit and no moral will to stand for his brethren against the Judaizers. His snubbing of them was the fruit, unbelief was the root. The flesh cannot love. Think of how the snubbed felt. Since the church was embroiled in conflict over this issue; they knew why he would not sit with them. They were left, sitting across the room (if our mental image of the situation is correct), confused, hurt, and very likely, doubting the sufficiency of *their* experience of Christ because of his action.

Peter's behavior gives us an opportunity to demonstrate the sheer practicality of the principle of sanctification by faith. In the moment of temptation, when the fear of man was swelling up in Peter, how would "believing the Gospel" have looked for him? How could he have responded differently had his focus been on Christ? Think again of Wesley's hymn (the theme hymn of *SONSHIP for Africa*), "Arise my soul, arise; shake off thy guilty fears; the bleeding sacrifice, in my behalf appears. . ." What would that "look of faith" have made possible? Peter would have seen Christ, seated at the Father's right hand, looking at him, loving him, interceding for him, clothing him in perfect righteousness. Had Peter contemplated *that*, he would not have needed to settle for the righteousness he got, which came by "joining in the hypocrisy" of the Judaizers, and earning their approval. Had he "believed the Gospel" in that moment of opportunity, the Holy Spirit would have blessed his faith with love. That love would, in turn, have behaved in a certain way: in an instant, Peter's "friends" (the Judaizers) would have become enemies, and his "enemies" (the uncircumcised group) would have become his friends. Then, as "faith worked through love," two things would have been *possible*, but let us state them as certainties. First, Peter would have lovingly, but firmly, "preached the Gospel" to the Judaizers who had invited him to join with them. He would have

done that repentantly, by exposing his heart of fear to them, repenting before them, and calling them to abandon their false righteousness and receive Christ's. Second, he would have been filled with such love and compassion for his friends on the other side of the room that he would have hurried over to embrace and be embraced by them. In *SONSHIP* we use the term "spiritual mathematics" to emphasize that our purpose is to bring God glory. Peter had a choice: walk in the Spirit or the flesh, and the "difference" between those two represented the "amount" of glory God stood to gain in this situation. The real loser in this battle was neither Peter nor the Galatians. It was Christ and his honor. (see *SONSHIP*, S13-6)

It should be noted that in the Galatian conflict, not surprisingly, the most zealous "law-lovers" were the worst law-breakers. This is the enigma of legalism. The law promises righteousness, but those who would find righteousness by it dishonor God and violate the Gospel. Focusing on the law kills love, and without love, there is no keeping of the law.

Judaizers and their Judaizing The Judaizers in Antioch didn't love Peter; they used him. They didn't *really* want to have dinner with him to enjoy his fellowship; they wanted his "vote" for their side. He was a pawn to be moved around the chess board of a church hall to bolster their righteousness. Legalism does that; it is powerless to love, so it pretends at love. Paul levels the charge of "hypocrisy" at them—twice in one sentence (2:13).

What about the other Judaizers—the group who traveled to the Galatian churches in Asia Minor—James' men? What did *they* want after? Votes and scalps. Paul, at the end of his letter, laid bare the Judaizers' motives to inform the Galatians that they were being used.

See what large letters I use as I write to you with my own hand!⁵

Those who want to make a good impression outwardly are trying to compel you to be circumcised. The only reason they do this is *to avoid being persecuted for the cross of Christ*. Not even those who are circumcised obey the law, yet they want you

⁵ As was his custom, up to this point, Paul had been dictating his letter to an *amanuensis*—a professional calligrapher with the proper pen, ink, parchment, and technique to produce the lettering required for a high-quality document. The "distinguishing mark" of Paul's letters was that they all ended with a few words in his own handwriting (cf. II Thess. 3:17)—thus his reference to "large letters" (Gal. 6:11). But here, apparently filled with emotion, he halted the dictation, took up the pen, and finished the *body* of the letter himself.

to be circumcised *that they may boast about your flesh*. May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world (Gal. 6:11–14, emphasis mine).

The Galatian Judaizers were motivated by two things, both having to do with their own righteousness: [1] They wanted to avoid being persecuted for the cross of Christ, i.e. to be “heroes who went after converted Gentiles” so that they would be approved by the in-group (the same motive for Peter’s shunning the uncircumcised believers in Antioch). [2] “They wanted to boast in your flesh,” i.e. they were trafficking in foreskins, and (figuratively) wanted to take *yours* back to Antioch and be praised for how many they got! It may be crude to modern Gentile ears, but the Jews have a long history of doing that, and we don’t mean figuratively. In Samuel 18, we read of David’s love for the beautiful Michael, daughter of King Saul. When word came to Saul that David wanted her hand in marriage, he gave his servants an order, “Say to David, ‘The king wants no other price for the bride than a hundred Philistine foreskins, to take revenge on his enemies’” (18:26). David and his friends went to work, and to impress Saul, came back with *two hundred*—David’s “righteousness” before the evil king.

Despite the Judaizers’ good intentions, Paul saw them as ravening wolves destroying Christ’s flock. It must have shocked the Galatian church members who had welcomed these strangers, when Paul shared with them what he considered a suitable punishment for them (5:12). If you happen to be white, and it has never occurred to you that white people are funny, look at the way “we” have handled Galatians 5:12 for two thousand years. In 1511, our English Puritan forbears translated the verse: “*I would they were even cut off which trouble you*” (KJV)—which sounds like an odd ecclesiastical sentence of some kind. That translation endured, not surprisingly, through the Victorian age. The 1901 ASV is almost too clumsy to read, but a hair more faithful to the original with its: “*I would that they that unsettle you would even go beyond circumcision.*” By the 1950s when the RSV

appeared, we were growing bold, thus the awful sounding: *"I wish those who unsettle you would mutilate themselves!"* which the NASB followed. But the NIV says it outright: *"As for those agitators, I wish they would go the whole way and emasculate themselves!"* The Greek verb they have all struggled with, of course, is ἀποκόπτω—to amputate. In Africa, talk of (male) and debate about (female) circumcision is in the newspapers and on television every week, so we "think Eastern" and understand Paul. His calling curses down on these false teachers reminded Luther of Peter's curse on Simon "the sorcerer" in Acts 8:20: *"Your silver perish with you!"* (Luther 1963, 27:46). Simon, says Luke, had "believed and was baptized!" (8:13) (We get our word, "simony" from here: the buying and selling of ecclesiastical offices.) To the great Apostle, Galatianism was dark and dangerous doctrine. We should—we must—share his concern, and act on it.

Gossip in Galatia Speaking of love, it was a rare commodity in the Galatian congregations. Listen to Paul's warning:

You, my brothers, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature; rather, serve one another in love. The entire law is summed up in a single command: "Love your neighbor as yourself." If you keep on biting and devouring each other, watch out or you will be destroyed by each other.

Gossip is such a natural habit, that like grownups biting their nails, the Galatians probably hadn't noticed that they were biting and devouring one another. One of our synonyms for gossip is "backbiting," so it is interesting that both Paul's description of gossip and our modern words for it all have cannibalistic overtones! That is why we call it "The Piranha Syndrome." Gossip is a "red flag" that legalism is around, and there is a good reason why this sin of the tongue infects legalistic churches like the plague. Legalism is a system built on self-made righteousness, and the cheapest righteousness you can buy is gossip—confessing someone else's sins. Jack Miller used to define gossip this way:

Gossip is the negative mirror image of evangelism. Evangelism is using Christ's righteousness as the basis for your righteousness and "telling the good news!" Gossip is using someone else's unrighteousness as the basis for your righteousness, and telling the "good news."

In Galatia, the "hunting season" was always open, and one's fellow Christians were the targets. Tearing down others to build up one's own righteousness had become a ritual way of life for them. Paul Miller (Jack's son), points out that we love gossip so much because it gives us the same warm feeling the Gospel does—it makes us feel right, righteous.

E. The Happy Ending

The Jerusalem Council In the end, the decision of the great Jerusalem Council put an official end to the grace-killing practice of requiring the Gentiles to keep Jewish ceremonial law. [Part I, APPENDIX I] It was a decision made in love. James the Just, the Lord's brother and chief spokesman for the Jewish church, ended the debate by saying, "*It is my judgment, therefore, that we should not make it difficult for the Gentiles who are turning to God*" (15:19). This sentiment shows that the Holy Spirit was at work. James then put this motion to the council: "*Instead we should write to them, telling them to abstain from food polluted by idols, from sexual immorality, from the meat of strangled animals and from blood*" (15:20). Thankfully, this was adopted, and put in a general letter "*to the Gentile believers in Antioch, Syria and Cilicia.*" We can take their "Cilicia" to mean, "up north," which would include the troubled region of Galatia. The council wrote:

It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us not to burden you with anything beyond the following requirements: You are to abstain from food sacrificed to idols, from blood, from the meat of strangled animals and from sexual immorality. You will do well to avoid these things" (Acts 15:28, 29). [James' motion restated]

Exactly how many requirements (three or four), and their exact nature, has been debated. The first, food sacrificed to idols is clear enough, though Paul tells the Corinthians that it is lawful—if you eat with faith, i.e. a clear conscience before God, and if there is no "weaker

brother" to offend (1 Cor. 8:1ff.). The rule here, as would be expected from Paul, is faith and love. With regard to abstaining "from blood," F. F. Bruce notes that the Western text has been altered for a Gentile audience, and suggests that this may involve a prohibition against inter-family marriage according to Leviticus 18:52 (Bruce 1979, 315). When we in East Africa read "from blood," we immediately think of the practice of some nomadic tribes (Maaai, Samburu, Turkana, etc.) of bleeding cows for their blood, and strangling them to ceremonially drink blood. God says, "the life is in the blood" (Lev. 17:14), and the Jerusalem Council understood that this particular prohibition in the ceremonial law touched the heart of God in a special way, and was to be considered binding. The last "law" is merely the seventh commandment restated—a good "third use" of the law meant to remind Gentile Christians not to ape the pagan culture they lived in. It is hard to imagine the low view of human sexuality that pervaded a culture in which the "worship services" to honor some of the pagan deities involved sexual relations with temple prostitutes.

The effect of the council's decision was to bring to abrupt halt the dangerous teaching that compliance to the ceremonial law was necessary for salvation, sanctification, or church membership. James, who should have known better in the first place, learned his lesson, stopped his Judaizing, and his sponsoring of Judaizers. Peter started eating with his Gentile friends again, circumcised or uncircumcised, hands washed or unwashed. The question for us is, do we see the implications, and have we learned the lesson?

F. Principles Gleaned from the Galatian Controversy

1. Law is a brutal taskmaster that cannot sanctify

In looking to the law, whether for justification or sanctification, you will be condemned by the law, because you cannot keep it. Try to keep it, and you will break it all the more. Jack Miller would say, "*The more you try to change, the more you stay the same,*" and beyond that, "*you become worse!*" Why? That is the way of the law! The law was meant

to be kept, and don't misunderstand us here, *passively*—that is, not by trying to keep an "it." This is not to say we are passive, only that we keep the law passively. Far from being passive, we are very active! To exercise faith in Christ in a moment like Peter had when the Judaizers were breathing down his neck, is the most fierce kind of battle the soul knows. But, we cannot get victory over the sin of fear by trying not to be afraid because we know the fear of man is a sin. We defeat the fear of man, by looking at Christ, and clothing ourselves in his righteousness. "Speak the truth in love," Paul said (Eph. 4:15). That is another of his "Christian commandments." It goes without saying that Peter *should have* spoken the truth in love, but he didn't because he couldn't. He was busy "practicing law," and the Decalogue said not to lie, but nothing about *how* one was to speak the truth. (Neither the Israelites as a nation nor the Pharisees as a party had inferred such from the law). They were too busy finding ways to "speak the truth" and lie at the same time (Mk. 7:11ff, etc.). Paul meant for us to keep that commandment *because it is a way to love people*, and he meant for us to find the power to do it by faith in Jesus which gives us the Spirit—not by "human effort." Without faith, we will either *not* speak the truth, or we will speak it in a spirit other than love—anger, or self-righteousness, for instance. *Lawkeeping is the passive result of an active faith - the fruit of faith, not the root of obedience.*

2. The righteousness of Christ is received by faith, from first to last

I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile. For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: "The righteous will live by faith" (Rom. 1:16, 17).

We can state the lessons regarding righteousness in two simple propositions: [1] There is only one source of free and genuine righteousness: Jesus Christ. [2] We receive that righteousness by faith for our justification, and by faith for our sanctification.

Three dependent corollaries of those foundational propositions, are three others lessons related to the law, the Spirit and love: [1] *The law is fulfilled in love—not by keeping rules.*

(Matt. 22:37ff; Rom. 13:8ff) [2] *The Spirit comes by faith—not by keeping rules.* (Gal. 3:1-5) [3] *Love comes from the Spirit—not by keeping rules.* (Gal. 5:22, 23).

Speaking to the three as one: we may be free from the outward manifestations of sin and still be lawbreakers. Consider these sins: idolatry, murder, adultery, and theft. In Africa, to refrain from those *is* righteousness. But, Jesus took the law further, and said that inward purity of the heart is required, that is, holiness is refraining from the *inward* forms of those same four sins—loving the world, hatred, lust, and covetousness (the Sermon on the Mount). We saw in the previous chapter, that Jesus “upped the ante” by his new commandment, so that until we have replaced those sins with: the worship of God, doing good to our enemy, serving the persons we formerly lusted after, and sharing with others what we have, we are still “lawbreakers.” Gal. 5:6: *“For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision has any value; the only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love.”* Or, his *“Circumcision is nothing and uncircumcision is nothing. Keeping God’s commands is what counts* (1 Cor. 7:19) is the same thing substituting love for “keeping God’s commands.” *“You, my brothers, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature; rather, serve one another in love. The entire law is summed up in a single command: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself’”* (Gal. 5:13, 14). And, to love we must have the Spirit, who gives us his fruit as we exercise faith. Without faith, we forfeit the Spirit’s power; without the Spirit’s power, we have no love, and without love, we cannot fulfill the law. Sanctification is a systemic whole. Remove one part, and there will be no “sanctification moments.”

3. Concrete application To make this as clear as we can, what exactly does faith “look” like? In Colossians chapter two, just before Paul tells the church that they have all “been circumcised with the circumcision of Christ, having being buried with him in baptism,” he tells them: *“Just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, so live in him”* (2:6). The NIV’s

translation of “live” catches the general sense of Paul, but loses his image, which is “walk.” The Greek verb is περιπατέω, from which we get “peripatetic,” one who walks around. If we press his analogy of the Christian life as a “walking” (hopefully we won’t press too far), we can imagine walking in Christ the way people walk. A walk is not particularly complicated. If you take one step and immediately take another, you have walked—not far—but if you keep doing it, you will make good progress on the road. To “walk in Christ” is to take two “steps”: repentance and faith. (Once again, Dabney’s “mother graces” appear.) When you first received Christ, you repented, that is, you *agreed* with God that you were a sinner. You took sides with God against yourself. Then, and this act was virtually simultaneous, you believed the Gospel. *Step One*: I am a sinner. *Step Two*: Jesus died for sinners—for me. That’s the kernel of the Gospel you believed for justification, and Paul says, we are to “walk” in Christ the same way as we received him. Notice that we are separating repentance (agreeing with God) and *the fruits of repentance*. We do that for a good reason. As the Marrow-men insisted, if you demand works for faith, you have salvation by works, not faith. We are not denying the necessity of fruit, only saying that it is not a condition of faith. But, back to our analogy.

Garbage righteousness A “sanctification moment” is a “walking in Christ.” To illustrate: if my wife asks me, “Honey, did you take out the garbage?” and I *have* already taken out the garbage (for an American male, the ultimate righteousness), I will be irritated at the question because I will hear it as (and she may mean it as) an insinuation that I may *not* have taken it out. I am insulted that she thinks I am not a good “garbage-taker-outer.” As long as I trust in my “take out the garbage” righteousness, I will be irritated every time the matter of garbage comes up, and alienation from my wife, and my wife from me will be the result. My problem, you see, is that I am not “believing the Gospel,” thus my irritation. Meaning? My righteousness at that moment, is very literally, my reputation as a man who remembers to

take out the garbage—not in Christ who is interceding for me, clothing me with *his* righteousness. A small Christ and a short fuse go together. If, in that instant, when my garbage righteousness is under attack, I recognize the irritation as sin (Step One: I am a sinner), and look at Christ, consciously remember him (Step Two: Jesus died for sinners), I can clothe myself in his righteousness, and the Holy Spirit will empower me to answer in love—without being threatened, “*Yes, honey, I took it out, but thanks for reminding me.*” If I don’t “go to Jesus,” I may very well say, “*Of course! I took it out over an hour ago. Why do you think you have to keep reminding me!?*”

Garbage, the subject of this illustration, is trivial, but it is in our dealing with life’s trivialities that we most often stumble. Doctrinaire talk about sanctification apart from grappling with the questions: “where we get our righteousness,” and “how am I loving my wife,” is fruitless. It is in these “little things” that we have opportunities to exercise faith in Christ so that the Spirit works in us: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, gentleness, faithfulness, goodness, and self control. These questions of the source of righteousness and our loving others lie at the heart of sanctification in daily life.

Think on this: what if I *had* forgotten to take out the garbage? No matter. We “work the Gospel” whether we are innocent or guilty. All day, every day, as consistently as we can, we must live in the conscious presence of our Abba-Father and his Son. This is how we “walk in Christ just as we received him” (Col. 2:6). Sanctification happens, or doesn’t happen when I am faced with an opportunity to selflessly love, or, when I have failed to love and have been exposed again as what I am—a sinner. Paul qualifies the “walk” of Colossians 2:6 with, “*rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness*” (2:7). Notice that the “walk” is a faith-walk, and that overflowing thankfulness is the result. Faith is what the Spirit responds to. Faith is the “immediate instrument” of sanctification. Faith—believing his Gospel, is how God gets glory from our lives.

Conclusion We have spoken about our Protestant watchfulness in guarding the front door of justification. We must continue. But, it seems that we are using any spare time we have left defending the status of the law carved on the walls of the house—lest some antinomian deface it, some libertine flaunt it, or, some *Marrowman* come along and put it in its proper place. The problem is, we have let the *thief of grace* slip into the back door of sanctification, and while were busy guarding justification and the law, he has ravaged our house, and we are reaping the whirlwind—a deeply legalistic, frighteningly carnal church.

It is easy to be critical of those “*foolish Galatians*” while standing a safe two millennia away and atop ten thousand pages of systematic theology. But, as we do the necessary work of magnifying their faults, we must have the courage to put our own hearts under the microscope. After that, let’s turn it on our Evangelical and Reformed back-yards to see what “circumcisions” we might have embraced or what “garbage righteousnesses” we might be trusting to beautify us. We *do* have them, you know, and recognizing and repenting of them is the first business, and must be the ongoing business of the Christian life.

CHAPTER 7

PRAXIS

THE POWER OF FAITH FOR SANCTIFICATION DEMONSTRATED

Teaching and Preaching Unto the Obedience of Faith

You yourselves are our letter, written on our hearts, known and read by everybody. You . . . are a letter from Christ, the result of our ministry, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts.

Not that we are competent in ourselves to claim anything for ourselves, but our competence comes from God. He has made us competent as ministers of a new covenant—not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life (11 Cor. 3:2, 3).

Introduction

Part II of this thesis is a training manual in personal and corporate renewal—*SONSHIP for Africa: The Discipleship Course for Disciples*. As a prelude to the course, this final chapter of Part I will illustrate the art of preaching and teaching the Gospel for sanctification. We will intermingle sermonie excerpts, critiques, synopses, “how-to” versus “how-not-to” instruction, testimonies, and real-life situations in which people—most of whom are our students, colleagues or counselees—“preach the Gospel to themselves” in the heat of battle against specific sins in their lives.

A. Brokenness, A New Paradigm for Your Ministry.

A man cannot enter the kingdom of Heaven until he has reached the stage of not caring two straws about his own status.”

— C. S. Lewis, in a letter to Arthur Greeves, 18 August 1930
(Sayer 1998, 28)

Lesson 16, in *SONSHIP for Africa*, “Brokenness, a New Paradigm for Your Future Ministry” is a first person “fireside chat” to pastors, teachers and parents. It encourages us to adopt a style of ministry in which we present ourselves to others as “clay pots” in whom God has poured the treasure of the Gospel (II Cor. 4:7). We mention this now because brokenness is the matrix in which a ministry devoid of game-playing occurs. We have a choice to make about how open we will be with others concerning our own weaknesses and struggles against sin. Here in Africa, as in much of Christendom, brokenness and humility are considered the traits of weak people undeserving of leadership. Self-assertion and power-brokering are features of the culture, and so the African “strong man” syndrome that afflicts our continental politics is endemic in the church. But brokenness and the Gospel go hand-in-hand. A haughty, warring spirit, or bullying spirit is the antithesis of the fruit of the Spirit, and a “red flag” that the aggressor is on a quest for his or her own power (righteousness) and that they intend to use you to get it. C. S. Lewis’ pithy quote on status seeking is pertinent. If I am “out for me,” you will forever be in my way. The Gospel is the cure—politically and ecclesiastically—for Africa’s self-destructive passion for national, tribal, and personal power.

But before the Gospel can transform the church, she must adopt a style of living the Gospel and speaking about the Gospel that is consistent with the truth about ourselves. *Our manner* significantly impacts the way people hear the Gospel, react to it, and live it out. What the church desperately needs is people who are ready to die to their reputations and talk candidly (but tastefully) about the fact that they are *real sinners* with a real Christ who meets them in *their need*. In our reluctance to do that, we have created an atmosphere of unreality in which our talk about grace sounds like so much empty verbiage. We Reformed Christians are particularly inconsistent here. Our voices are the loudest when it comes to informing sinners of *their* total depravity, but we become mysteriously mute rather than speak of our own. For us to be healthy spiritually, and, to have healthy ministries that offer others substantive help, we must

be willing to endure the pain of self-exposure and talk about *our* real sins. If we don't, the danger is that the Gospel will remain a diffuse nebula floating in space—a theoretical cure for theoretical sinners. (see Part II, S-16-7ff.). It is time we died to our love of reputation.

When we are ready to tell our parishioners, spouses, and children, "*Jesus died for sinners—for me. I am a sinner. I have been angry. I have been unforgiving, unloving and unkind to you. Please forgive me! Pray for me! I need grace!*" the Gospel will take on a freshness and power that it had lost in the haze of generalities. Jack Miller used to say to us pastors: "*The pastor must be the chief repentant.*" That goes for any leaders, and for parents. He also told us mothers and fathers: "*The greatest legacy a father can leave his children, is his repentances.*" That goes for mothers, Sunday school teachers, and leaders of any type. The way up, is down. Lessons 10 and 15 in SONSHIP for Africa deal with the specifics of repentance and brokenness in relationships and ministry.

B. Sermonics: Motivating by Grace

Most of us have two views of the means of sanctification: the theoretic and the actual. It is in our attempts to change the behavior of others by preaching, teaching, exhorting, and parental instruction that our real methodology is revealed.

1. Romans 12: The Legalist's Favorite Axe

The Long Song A personal word. I have an old sermon, yellow with age, on Romans 12. I once thought it to be my finest work—one that should be enshrined in some sermonic hall of fame. Once, in 1970, I preached it at the great Shenandoah Presbyterian Church in Miami, Florida at the ordination of a colleague. Delegates from the Presbytery were assembled along with a congregation of several hundred. Standing in the high pulpit (a heady experience in itself), I preached forcefully, and, to ensure that I would be well-liked

entertainingly. At the close of my message, the presbytery's moderator rose and gushed, "*To add anything to what has been said would be to guild the lily and perfume the rose!*" This was my finest hour.

Unbeknown to me, I had done nothing but preach the law. You can, you know, preach the New Testament as if it were the Old. "*Chapter 12 of Romans*," I said to the assembled, "*separates Romans into its believing side and behaving side*"—a brilliant observation, I thought (though hardly original), and a finely turned phrase. It was also a *sure warning* to anyone who knew better than to separate believing and behaving, that they'd better get ready for a real beating, because the law was coming down the mountain. It was.

I *commanded* all present to present themselves as living sacrifices, holy and acceptable to God. I *commanded* them not to be conformed to this world, and not to think more highly of themselves than they ought to think (which, since they were sinners, was *not* very). I *commanded* them to be of one mind, to use their gifts (carefully capsulizing each, prophesying, serving, teaching, etc.). I *commanded* them to love without dissimulation, to continue instant in prayer, and to be fervent (cleverly noting that the Greek word means "boiling") in their zeal. I commanded all the things Paul commanded, but I was no Paul. Not once did I mention faith or the Spirit, i.e. *how* they might be enabled to do any of it. Without preaching the "how" of the New Covenant, I was nothing but a little Moses standing atop a wooden Mt. Sinai handing out commandments. I exhorted using guilt, ridicule, irony, humor,¹ heart-warming stories—every rhetorical device at my command, but the bottom line was: "*this is your duty; the Bible has made it clear, so get moving; try as hard as you can to perform it.*"

¹ How does one find humor in Romans 12? You don't, unless you happen to be a sanguine *and* a legalist. In that case, you have an inner compulsion to both *press home the law and* make it "fun." On 12:1—"The problem with "*living sacrifices*" is that they are always blowing out the fire and crawling off the altar!" always manages to earn a chuckle.

I was not conscious that the foundation of my entire ministry was legal, and that my tone was law and not Gospel—until I attended a Sonship renewal conference and, for the first time, heard sanctification taught from a grace perspective.

Romans 12—Again One of the stories Jack related at this conference concerned the time he and his wife Rose Marie attended the church of a pastor-friend while on vacation. The exposition was from Romans 12. He harangued the congregation about their duty to obey, and scolded them for their frequent failures to obey. He flailed away at their consciences until they were raw. Driving away after the service, Jack looked to his wife for some much-needed reassurance: “*Rose Marie, have I ever preached like that?*” Without a pause she said, “*Oh yes, Jack. Many times,*”

2. Listening to Ourselves

We preachers and teachers should take time to listen to ourselves. If encouraging others to holiness is our goal, we had better adopt *Gospel* tactics. There is a lesson to be learned from Jack and Rose Marie’s reaction to their friend’s preaching. They wanted with all their hearts to follow Christ, but they found the message discouraging, even offensive—anything but a motivation to holy living. We need to ask ourselves: “*has the type of preaching that pressed my duty heavily on my conscience, ever moved me to a genuine, loving and lasting obedience to Christ?*” My preaching in that mode never changed anybody, nor did it change me. It did sometimes have a *temporary* effect, but dutiful, guilt-ridden, transient compliances to the word of God, no matter how well-intentioned, are hardly what God desires from his sons and daughters.

The fruit of the Spirit as law The reader may not realize this, but just as you can preach the New Testament as if it were the Old, you can preach the fruit of the Spirit as if it were the law. Just because a preacher, teacher or parent understands that we *should*

manifest the fruit of the Spirit, does not at all mean that they know, or teach, that the Holy Spirit gives his fruit as a result of *ἀκοῆς πίστεως*—the hearing of faith (Gal. 3: 5). Here is the fruit of the Spirit *as law*:

You ought to be *loving*; you must be *joyful*; you should have *peace*.
You ought to be *patient*; you must be *kind*; you should be *gentle*.
You ought to be *faithful*; you must be *good*; you should be *self-controlled*—
because *God says so!*

Do you detect a similar tone in this excerpt from Ryle?

Let us beware of supposing that the Gospel has lowered the standard of personal holiness, and that *the Christian is not intended to be as strict and particular about his daily life as the Jew*. . . . The more light we have, the more we ought to love God. . . . May we never forget our obligations! The Christian who is content with a low standard of personal holiness has got much to learn (Ryle n.d., *Thoughts*, 88, 89, emphasis mine).

Homilies which command fruit are sad, but they are heard from pulpits, Christian school classrooms, and homes all over Christendom. When our eyes are off Christ, everything becomes law—including grace, and in a graceless lifestyle, we are powerless to obey.

The cycle of defeat There is a cycle we go through under legalistic preaching. Take, for example, commanding the fruit of love. We know the preacher is telling the truth when he tells us we *should* be more loving. God said so. But, we have been *unloving*, so we: [1] feel guilty and ashamed about our failure, [2] promise to be more loving. (I have been known to make vows to love an enemy, be more thankful, kind, read the Bible more, rise early to pray more, give more, battle some besetting sin with greater fervor, etc.). But, [3] **despite our best intentions, we still fail to measure up.** We try hard to be more loving, but the people in our lives are not very lovable, and our momentary gains are washed away by the relentless incoming tide of our flesh. Ah, then, we hear yet another sermon that presses the duty to love on our conscience, so with renewed vigor (though perhaps with a shade less hope) we begin the cycle all over again. Why is it, that our mightiest strivings

after holiness turn into the occasions of more failure and guilt? It is because we have left out faith in Christ and reliance on the Spirit. The law and human effort cannot sanctify. Write it down.

3. Ryle vs. McCheyne on Sabbath Observance: A Law to Keep, or a Day to Love?

"Church attendance" The very words we choose to describe *worship* are questionable. "Assembling ourselves together" (Heb. 10:25) is something preacher's often press on their congregations, and parents on their children. And well they should. Faithfulness in worship is another of those non-negotiables of the Christian life. That is why we have chosen to use it to showcase law vs. Gospel preaching. First, a few questions: What fuels our "church attendance"? Do we go because we are commanded to, or because we are afraid not to? Do we go because if we are absent, we might be missed? Do we go because it is our job? (We are the pastor, a worship leader or hold a paid staff position.)

Consider the imperative: *"Let Israel rejoice in their Maker; let the people of Zion be glad in their King. Let them praise his name with dancing and make music to him with tambourine and harp."* We are even told to be glad. How can David command emotions? *"For the LORD takes delight in his people; he crowns the humble with salvation. Let the saints rejoice in this honor and sing for joy on their beds (Ps. 149: 2-5).* Do you see the connection between God's delight in us, and our ability to worship? We are stirred to take delight in God, as we remember that God takes delight in us.

How, then, should we encourage people to spend their Sundays in fellowship with Christ and his people? We have two choices: appeal to their sense of duty to keep the Sabbath holy, or, remind them of the love of Christ for them so that they hunger to worship him. Compare Ryle and McCheyne with that in mind. Ryle is writing on Matthew 5:17, "I came not to destroy the law, but to fulfill." McCheyne has chosen Mark 2:27—Jesus' retort to the

Pharisees when they criticized him for picking a handful of wheat as he walked through a field on the Sabbath day. First, here is a Ryle's treatment of the subject:

May we all watch our conduct on this subject. Saving Christianity is closely bound up with Sabbath observance. May we never forget that our great aim should be to "keep the Sabbath holy" . . . It is lawful to do well and to show mercy. But to give the Sabbath to idleness, pleasure-seeking, or to the world, is utterly unlawful. It is contrary to the example of Christ, and sin against the plain commandment of God (Ryle n.d., 1:124).

Robert Murray McCheyne was stirred by pamphlets circulated by the Edinburgh & Glasgow Railway attacking the strict Scottish Lord's Day observance (*Memoirs* 1996). He entitled his sermon, "Why I Love the Lord's Day." Here is an excerpt:

The Sabbath was made for man. Dear Fellow countrymen. . . In the name of all God's people in this town and in this land, I commend for your consideration the following reasons for loving the Lord's Day: Because it is the Lord's Day. "This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice, and be glad in it." (Ps. 118:24). . . The Lord's Day is His property, just as the Lord's Supper is the supper belonging to Christ. It is His table. He is the bread. He is the wine. He invites the guests. He fills them with joy and with the Holy Ghost. So it is with the Lord's Day. All days of the year are Christ's, but He hath out one in seven as peculiarly His own. "He hath made it" or marked it out. Just as He planted a garden in Eden, so He hath fenced about this day and made it His own.

This is the reason we love it, and would keep it entire. We love everything that is Christ's. We love His Word. It is better to us than thousands of gold and silver. "O how we love His law! it is our study all the day." We love His house. It is our trysting-place with Christ, where He meets with us and communes with us from off the mercy seat. We love His table. It is His banqueting-house, where His banner over us is love—where He looses our bonds, and anoints our eyes, and makes our hearts burn with holy joy. We love His people, because they are His, members of His body, washed in His blood, filled with His Spirit, our brothers and sisters for eternity. And we love the Lord's Day, because it is His. Every hour of it is dear to us—sweeter than honey, more precious than gold. It is the day He rose for our justification. It reminds us of His love, and His finished work, and His rest. And we may boldly say [as Ryle said] that man does not love the Lord Jesus Christ who does not love the entire Lord's Day (*Memoirs* 1996, n.p., message XXXI).

A bit strong on the finish, perhaps, but, no matter how you view "the Sabbath," McCheyne does not call us to merely obey a commandment, but to enter into a relationship with

Jesus. His tone and manner are such that you cannot help but fall in love with this day, the Lord of this day, and want to join the preacher in his passion to keep it sacred. *This is authentic New Covenant preaching!* It stirs up faith in Christ and love for Christ (love is used twelve times in one paragraph) so that we find ourselves responding not to a commandment, but to a Christ who loves us. Whether or not you happen to agree with McCheyne's view of keeping a dawn-to-dusk Sabbath, don't you feel that you would be robbing yourself of some great delight if you failed to avail yourself of such a blessed opportunity to share the riches of Christ in fellowship with his people?

What should we do as teachers, preachers and parents, to stir up holiness in those under our care? First, we do what McCheyne told us to do here—then, we tell others the same.

The only way to hold fast is to believe more and more. Get a larger acquaintance with Christ, with His person, work, and character. Every page of the gospel unfolds a new feature in His character, every line of the epistles discloses new depths of His work. Get more faith, and you will get a firmer hold. . . . Take a long intense look at Jesus—often. If you wanted to know a man again, and he was going away, you would take an intense look at his face. Look then at Jesus, deeply, intensely, till every feature is graven on your heart. . . . (*Memoirs*, 1996)

What did this young pastor tell us about how to grow in Christ? "Believe more." "Get more faith." How do we get more faith? "Look at Jesus often." Once again the truth comes home: to be like Christ, look at Christ. If we want others to be like Christ, we tell *them* to look at Christ. Now compare the *strategy for achieving obedience* used by McCheyne, by J. C. Ryle on page 194, and by the *Jihad* on page 6. (Note especially Ryle's second sentence.)

C. Detoxifying a Legal Spirit

In 1899, the Rev. George Morrison wrote a biographical introduction for a new edition of Thomas Boston's *Man in His Fourfold State*. Boston, as we recall, was the Scottish Presbyterian minister who got himself boxed from the church (temporarily) for his advocacy of Edward Fisher's 1646, *Marrow of Modern Divinity*. Morrison records the fascinating story

of why Fisher wrote the book, and how Boston discovered it in 1720 (1970, 25). The church of England in Fisher's day, was embroiled in a debate over the relationship between law and grace—a debate that deeply interested him (1970, 26).

Like a clean English gentleman, he saw and scorned the unworthy license that men were calling the liberty of Christ. On the other hand, he had himself, for twelve weary years, been *fettered by a legal spirit*, and ignorant of the secret of free grace. And when he found the light, and grasped, through conference and prayer and most exhaustive reading of the older law and the newer liberty, *nothing would serve but he must tell the news*. So came the Marrow (Boston 1970, 26, emphasis mine).

What can we do if we find that we are "fettered by a legal spirit"? In his book *True Spirituality*, Francis Schaeffer lists five reasons why the Christian may fail to grow in grace. The last of those is, "*he may not have been taught that there is a reality of faith to be acted on consciously after justification. This last point is the point of ignorance of many who stand in the orthodox and historic stream of the Reformation*" (1971, 84).² Schaeffer has put his finger on one of the residual toxins in our Protestant theology: the woeful lack of teaching that sanctification is by faith. He goes on to point out that our ignorance exacts an awful toll on us because the Christian may fail to "possess his possessions in this present life" (1971, 84). By "possessions," he means new life that is supernaturally produced—genuine growth in holiness. Next, he explains the value of understanding, and *acting on*, the fact that faith in Christ actually sanctifies. He says the discovery of this truth can be a revolutionary experience for the Christian—not unlike conversion. We can hear a personal testimony in what follows. He says:

² Criticism of the same sort comes from Lutheran Robert J. Koester: "By focusing their religion on the positive effects of keeping the law, the Evangelicals are working with something the human spirit *can* muster by its own strength. They are working with a natural spirit, and their religion ultimately will gravitate toward an emphasis on the law to sustain the spirit they received in their conversion. . . . It is not that the Evangelical wants to turn salvation into works. What happens, however, is that his initial starting point of yearning for moral improvement has already moved his understanding of Christianity into the area of human ethical action. To the extent that one's Christianity focuses on this, he is working with another spirit, a spirit he *can* effect through what he does" (1993, 93).

But when a man does learn the meaning of the work of Christ in the present life, a new door is open to him. And this new door then seems to be so wonderful that often it gives the Christian, as he begins to act upon that knowledge of faith, the sense of something that is as new as was his conversion. And it has been true for many of us that at a certain point, after we have been Christians for a long time, suddenly through the teaching of the Bible—directly or through someone teaching us—we have seen the meaning of the work of Christ and the blood of Jesus Christ for our present life, and a new door opens for us. So what is needed is the knowledge of the meaning of the work of Christ in our present life, for our present life, and then for us to act upon it in faith (Schaeffer 1971, 84).

If we find that our souls are sick with the toxin of legalism, we can do what Fisher, Boston, and Schaeffer recommend: go to Christ, and find in him our righteousness for sanctification, just as we did for justification. When we begin to “walk the walk,” the two steps of “repent, and believe,” we will begin to grow again. Sanctification, we have learned, goes on by faith in Christ, and progresses in proportion to our faith. Once we are gripped by the meaning of the work of Christ for our present life, “*we must tell the news!*” Fisher told the news in the *Marrow*. Seventy-four years later, during a visit to an old soldier’s cottage, Thomas Boston spied a little book on a shelf above the window head. It was *The Marrow of Modern Divinity* (ref. page 105). He was helped by it, shared it, and saw it rock a legalistic church to its roots. Boston’s witness surfaced in Francis Schaeffer. Schaeffer and Jack Miller shared it in the early 1970s. Miller’s witness touched the author in 1990, and now we are “telling the news” to Africa. Now Africans are telling Africans across the continent, and, by God’s grace, we will see a revival of Gospel faith in Christ’s church—faith for justification, and faith for sanctification.

D. Becoming a Fountain of Grace to Others

On the last and greatest day of the Feast, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, “If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him.” By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive. Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified (John 7:37–39).

John Brown of Edinburgh (1764–1858) produced a sensitive, warmhearted series on the teachings of Christ—*Discourses and Sayings of the Lord Jesus Christ*. Brown observed that when Christ calls us to come to him, that the one who issues the invitation is “the source of all that we seek.” “Oh let us ‘incline our ear and come to HIM; let us hear that our souls may live!’” (Brown, 270).

He points out that Jesus’ call to us is “a double call: ‘come — drink.’” (Jn. 7:37 uses the Greek present, i.e., “keep coming,” and “keep drinking.”) This idea of coming to Jesus is, he said, just a figurative language for “the exercises of the mind and heart in reference to him. . . .” and the “movement of the thoughts and affections towards him”—i.e. the movement of faith. He noted that the only condition Jesus laid down for our coming is thirst. “*If thou art on earth, not in hell, thou art invited*” (Brown, 270). “The invitation is addressed to us. . . . Have we complied with it? If we have not, O! let us comply with it now. If we have, let us continue to comply with it – *we constantly need to come to him and drink: ‘all our springs are in him’*” (Brown, 271, emphasis mine). And, what did he say is the purpose of this of “coming and drinking?”

First of all, we need to be filled and satisfied:

He who accepts the invitation obtains large, continued draughts from Jesus Christ, as the fountain of blessings. There is no setting bounds to the measure of holy happiness any man may obtain from Jesus Christ — “according to his faith shall it be to him.” If he continues to have any spiritual wants, it is not because the fountain is not full and flowing; nor is it because continued access to it is denied him; it is simply because, not believing, he does not come and drink. In a persevering, ever-growing faith, the believer may obtain a steady, ever-increasing, holy happiness (Brown, 273).

But this coming and drinking is not just a “Jesus for me” experience. Our happiness is only the beginning. Through our union with Christ, we live lives of obedience, but more, the Holy Spirit actually flows *through* us. “He who accepts this invitation shall not only have his thirst quenched, but. . . shall become a secondary fountain for quenching the

thirst of others" (Brown, 274). Christ is the fountainhead of our ability to nurture the saints, and of our evangelism. *Christian love makes war!* First it takes us captive, and then sends us out in Christ's name to take others captive to him! Brown said,

If we would be savingly useful to others, we must receive saving blessings for ourselves. If we would have rivers of waters flow out of us to refresh and cleanse others, we must believingly come to Jesus, the fountain of life and drink. If we would give freely, we must receive freely. . . . If we be, as I trust we are, really desirous of succeeding in the good work of endeavoring to make others, both at home and abroad, holy and happy in the enjoyment of "heavenly and spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus," let us seek for ourselves a larger measure of Divine influence, and of that holy happiness which it produces. This [drinking of Christ] will certainly secure purity in our aims, constancy and perseverance in our exertions. . . . Those who are to be the diffusers of holy happiness . . . [are] those who have drunk deep of the fountain of saving blessings, "out of whose hearts are to flow rivers of living waters" (Brown, 274, 75).

A week ago, we received an invitation by phone to teach "Advanced Evangelism" at Ethiopian Theological College in Addis Ababa in July 1998. The caller was one of our former students, now a professor of New Testament and Ethics at ETC. An avid teacher and preacher of sanctification by grace, he requested that *SONSHIP for Africa* be used as the syllabus for the course. After arguing that we had not designed the course as an evangelism training tool, he came back with words to this effect: "*No, these students already had the 'how-to' course. What they need now is to understand the message, be the right messengers and have the right motivation*"—a clear case of the student out-visioning his teacher.

When the Gospel *is* the "good news" to a Christian—and by that we mean "current events," not ancient history—he will not be able to stop himself from telling the news. Passion for the Gospel is what God wants from us. It is also what the church and the world need from us. But, we must not *try* to be passionate about the Gospel. Believing the Gospel supplies the passion! What the church needs in our day is a solid corps of ten-thousand "*heavy drinkers*"—men and women who are so dependent on the Spirit of Christ that they refuse to preach, teach, do evangelism, plant churches, or parent their children without

the whole endeavor being grounded in Gospel faith. If “maturity” means being cold and doctrinaire, may we all be babes who never grow up!

Stanley Voke, in his booklet *Personal Revival*, tells the story of a group of newly converted boys who joined a Bible study group with their peers:

The boys. . . not being used to public prayer, found themselves at a loss for words during the chain of prayer. At the close, an older boy, the leader of the class, prayed, “*O Lord, we thank you for these new chaps. We know they haven't been Christians very long, so they don't know very much. But we know that as they go on with us, they will become much more complicated*” (Voke 1964, 27, emphasis mine).

“Complicated,” that is what we are, and that is our problem. Schaeffer, speaking of the present value of the blood of Christ,” says: “We may know the doctrine by mental assent without making the doctrine ours. . . in the last analysis, it is never doctrine alone that is important. It is always doctrine appropriated that is important (1971, 84). To be a “fountain of grace,” we need only to begin drinking of Christ, and keep drinking of him. Effort is not required, believing is. The Spirit will take care of the rest as we keep believing (Gal. 3:5), and keep drinking (Jn. 13:35).

Lord Jesus! May we hear your gracious call, and flee to you as our fountain of life and strength-- lest we spend our days laboring out of our own inadequacy, and thereby rob ourselves of joy, the Lost of your beauty, the Saints of an example of your power to transform--and you of your glory!

E. Toward a New Methodology: Discipling by Grace

Archibald Alexander has warned us of a counterfeit sanctification which, instead of having Christ and his free grace as its object, trusts in self and flourishes, but without the true evidences of the Spirit. Genuine Christians can and do fall into living like this—Christians with “*true doctrine. . . acknowledged in theory*” but which “*is not practically felt and acted on*” (1967, 166). He noted how new Christians learn from older ones how to pretend at holiness:

The new convert lives upon his frames [props, or external devices] rather than on Christ, while the older Christian is still found struggling in his own strength and, failing in his expectations of success. He becomes discouraged first, and then sinks into a gloomy despondency, or becomes in a measure careless. At that point the spirit of the world comes in with restless force (1967, 166).

Jerry Bridges, a board member of World Harvest Mission, has been on the staff of the Navigators, since 1953. For many years he was their Vice President for corporate affairs, and he remains a best-selling author for their publishing arm, Nav-Press. Here in Africa, we call the Navigators, "the discipleship" people. Find a mature Christian leaders in Nairobi, and you'll likely find the "Navs" somewhere in their background. For the past several years, however, Bridges has been prodding the organization to rethink their discipleship methodology. He believes there has been an overemphasis on duty and discipline, and an underemphasis on love and grace. He notes that we dichotomize the Christian life: *"the Gospel for the unbeliever, and the challenges of discipleship"* for the believer. Bridges writes:

I have come to realize that way of looking at the Christian life is inadequate. It doesn't produce joyful, whole hearted believers who know what it means to live by God's grace every day of their lives. Instead it tends to produce dutiful, but somewhat guilt-laden disciples, who know they fail to live up to all the challenges of their calling. Or worse, it produces modern day Pharisees who are self-righteous because they are disciplined. If our typical, "Gospel for the unbeliever and discipleship for the believer" paradigm is inadequate, what is the better way? *I believe the most important message we need to hear as believers is the Gospel.* This doesn't mean we don't need challenge and instruction in the various expressions of discipleship. It means we need to practice discipleship in the atmosphere of the Gospel.

Someone has said, "Discipline without desire is drudgery." What is it that puts desire into the discipline of discipleship? *What is it that will motivate us to joyously follow Christ? It is the Gospel; the Good News that all our sins are forgiven through the death of Christ, and that His perfect righteousness has been [and is being] imputed to us* (Bridges 1994, *Harvester*, emphasis mine).

As to motivation, Bridges explains that as we “*learn to live every day in the atmosphere of the gospel,*” the love of Christ will be the driving compulsion of our lives, and our ministries of discipleship. “Christ’s love compels us. . . to live no longer for ourselves but for Him who died for us” (II Cor. 5:14–15). The Gospel saves us, and the Gospel keeps us in the love of God, so that we can live lives of love.

Bridges has put his finger on the “sanctification gap” in Christian discipleship. Review the manuals for new Christians by Miladin and Gettys in chapter two, and on the basis of what we have learned, locate the “power source” in their teaching. We think you will find it is human effort. Their model for discipling seems to be: “give them the Gospel to get them into the Kingdom, and the law to keep them in.” We need to face it: this *is* typical Evangelical and Reformed discipleship, and, *it is a bankrupt model*. This is the model we were trained with, and adopted as our own. We have not even thought to question that it might be inconsistent with the principle of the Gospel. *We are Galatians; we just use different laws.*

SONSHIP for Africa, is a course based on the model developed by World Harvest Mission in the USA in the mid-1980s. (see “A Brief History of Sonship Training” in the introductory material of *SONSHIP for Africa*.) In the past six months, two large international mission organizations have approached World Harvest in Philadelphia with urgent requests for help. Their missionaries, they say, are constantly in conflict with one another, and scores of marriages are in jeopardy. The same holds true for the expatriate missionary community in Africa. Seventy five percent of first-term missionaries never return to serve a second term. That was the case with my family after a five-year stint in Kenya in the 1970s. We could not get along with our fellow missionaries, and so chose to leave rather than pretend to love. In our view, the problem was them, but the truth was, it was us—or, at least, our sinful reactions to what we perceived was their sin.

How does *SONSHIP* do battle with the legalism that is destroying God's missionary force and the church it has planted? We use a simple strategy. We major on the law, the Gospel, the Spirit and faith (Paul's strategy with the Galatians) to help people to get their eyes off their own righteousness which comes through law, and fix them on Christ and his righteousness which comes by faith. In other words, we "re-evangelize" Christians in the sense of calling them back to the simple faith in the Gospel they had at first. The Holy Spirit is eager to bless such faith with spiritual renewal which is manifested in personal and corporate repentance, mutual forgiveness, healed relationships, and the power to love others—the members of our families, our neighbors, the lost, and even our fellow missionaries.

SONSHIP is long on grace, and hard on sin. On pages 184–185 we outlined the Colossians 2:6 "two-step walk" of repentance and faith: "I am a sinner; Jesus died for sinners." We understand that "by the law comes the knowledge of sin" (Rom. 3:20 KJV), but that it is only the Gospel can deal with the guilt and power of sin. Therefore, when we came to chose what to teach as "a rule of life," we chose *faith in Christ and life in the Spirit*—not the moral law. Paul said clearly, "If you are led by the Spirit, you are not under law"—meaning that as we walk by faith, "fixing our eyes on Jesus," the Spirit blesses us with genuine obedience to the law—"the obedience of faith." This obedience fulfills the moral law—not only in its bare outward requirements, but in its spiritual demands as well. *But, how does the Pauline doctrine of sanctification by faith translate into the battles we fight "down in the trenches" every day?*

F. Real People Fighting Real Sins by the Gospel

1. The Preacher Who Hadn't A Clue We promised to finish the story of the preacher who hadn't a clue about the means of sanctification—me.

Our church was a busy place, but we were not growing. We *did* have new hearts—a bit ragged around the edges from too much trying, but new nonetheless. And, we had the Holy

Spirit indwelling us. But we were ignorant of how faith could join the two. So, we struggled on in our own strength, and so constantly grieved and quenched the Spirit. We were so enamored of our own ministry-righteousness, we forgot that Jesus had plenty to offer.

After ten years of law-ministry at Altadena Valley PCA, I was tired of flogging them, and they were tired of being flogged. We were all tired. We had rehearsed our Christian duties so many times and in so many ways, we could recite them in our sleep—The Ten Commandments, the Christian Commandments: duties to our wives, duties to our husbands, duties to our children, duties to our parents, duties to our employers and employees, duties as citizens, duties to the born, duties to the unborn, duties to the lost, duties to the saved, duties, duties, duties. Not that we had any power to perform our duties, we just knew what they were and battered one another with them. My, but we were a legal bunch.

As an “every member a minister” church, we were a busy bunch as well, but the intramural competition to “be the best” kept us defeated. I was the worst set the pace. One of my key elders left the church in exasperation, declaring that I was “trying to breed a race of thoroughbred Christians.” I was, was proud of it, and he didn’t measure up.

By mid-1990, we had concluded (but didn’t discuss, that God had brought this group of overly educated, reasonably intelligent, and relatively successful people together in order to demonstrate man’s ineptitude in matters spiritual. It seemed that we were too weak to get along with one another and serve God fruitfully. “Energetically active and spiritually ineffective” described us. Actually, we were much too strong, too self-reliant, and too bent on getting honor for ourselves to really succeed *with* God or *for* him.

When a set of taped messages on the book of Galatians found their way from Philadelphia to Birmingham, some of our members began listening to them (including my wife), and God broke half-a-dozen people. This little “club” (which I very much resented) started to pray for the pastor—“that the Father would let Johnny know how much he loved him.”

They sensed that if I could rest in the Father's love as a son, I would cease to serve him as a slave—and, they hoped, cease being a slave-driver. Like the Judaizers used Peter, I was unconsciously using my congregation as an extension of my own righteousness. I used them to "clothe me," and when they didn't do a good job of it, I would flog them harder with the law. My thoroughbreds needed to work up a good sweat on the track.

God answered their prayer. The Father showed me his love, and it radically changed my heart, my home, my motivation for ministry, and, not surprisingly, my style of ministry. And, our church changed. How did this happen?

The revolution began for me when my wife Becky and I attended a *Sonship* conference with fifteen other Presbyterian pastors and their wives. We were proud men -- proud of our right doctrine. It seems odd now, but our doctrine *about* Christ, not Christ himself, *was* our righteousness. The teaching that week was intrusive in the extreme, but the Spirit did the work, not the teachers. I had never witnessed their communication style before. They talked a lot about repentance, *and they did all the repenting!* I was baffled. How was it that I felt I had to spend my days "covering up" my sin, but they were free "to be sinners?" But their teaching had a ring of authenticity—it was Pauline. Their manner of life and teaching showed mine for what it was—Romans 12 hypocrisy, a sham, a lie. They seemed to be covered with an invisible armor that made them able to confess their struggles and sins: their temptations to live for the praise of men, their tendency to do the work of ministry out of duty rather than love, and their desire to build and boast in a record based on their own accomplishments. As the week progressed, the idol of twenty-five years of "success" in ministry crumbled before my eyes. It was devastating. I had arrived at that place a Pharisee, and left a publican. For years I had preached justification by faith, blind to the fact that I had been trying to sanctify myself by my works.

God broke me deeply. I repented publicly to my congregation, put down my whip, and began telling my people, whom I now saw as God's sons and daughters, how much he loved them. Instead of turning them into libertines, the Gospel began to transform them into "saints!"

Amazing grace. They began working for Christ out of love, and the fruit looked different—beautiful, because it was God-centered ministry. Gossip began to die away in the church. People were repenting to one another (You can't kill a dead man.); relationships in families were being healed; long-standing hurts were forgiven. We changed. We loved. We loved our families; we loved one another, and we loved the lost. No, ours was not a perfect situation. Sin was still there. None of us "did renewal" very well, but it was a dramatic improvement. We were a new church, and at last, we had a passion to bring glory to Christ instead of ourselves.

The happiest person in the congregation must have been Betty, the dear lady who had asked me that Sunday morning, how the Holy Spirit was related to obedience. After ten years of having her soul parched by the law, it started to rain refreshing, Gospel rain. In 1991, I pulled out the manuscripts from my 1980s Ephesians series, and preached the book again, as a self-conscious congregational "experiment in grace." The purpose was to learn how to keep Paul's Christian commandments by the Spirit. I would read paragraphs from those old sermons, show where the theology of sanctification was flawed, and preach the obedience of faith. (The people loved this—the preacher criticizing his own work!)

What a Gospel we had! What a Gospel to break and warm the heart! What a helper we had in the Spirit—God in us—filling us with himself, giving us his fruit, and empowering us to be like Jesus. What a joy it was to preach the Gospel to others, and be able to hear it for myself at the same time! Betty drank in the truth. We all did.

Do I always live up to what I know about the law and faith and the Spirit in sanctification? No. But I am growing, and learning that the way up is down, that the way to strength is weakness. I am learning that I will never graduate from the school of grace, and never earn anything other than a *paper* degree in divinity—until heaven. Even then, it will be a gift. Being a "big sinner" puts me in the company of Paul—not bad company, at all.

The stories of four other sinners follow: “Angela,” who had a problem with anger; “Gordon,” who was prone to gossip; “Leonard” who struggles with lust, and Joe who wanted to learn how to pray. Joe is in heaven; the other three battle on.

2. “Angela” and Anger (one of my Kenyan students) Angela’s four children, ages two to seven, were a constant source of irritation. When she got home from work in the afternoon, the house was invariably in a mess, and the children were fighting one another. Angela’s pattern was to enter the house yelling and swinging. She often beat the children with whatever she could find. Her tactics worked. Within seconds of entering the house, the fighting stopped, and quiet returned. The *ayah* (African maid) was free to go to the servant’s quarters in the rear of the house. Angela would prepare dinner for the children, put them to bed, and then await the return of her non-Christian husband from work. Many nights he failed to come home. She suspected he was out drinking and consorting with other women. At the dinner table each evening, the children were silent, and if their mother made any sudden movements, they would flinch, fearing a blow. Angela was one the twenty-one children of peasant parents (four wives, one man), and had fought her way through secondary school and university, to earn a degree in accounting. As the chief accountant of a large international missionary agency in Kenya, she made a respectable salary, but her husband forced her to run the household on it—children’s clothes, school fees, food—everything. His money was his to squander. Angela had a lot to be angry about. The church she attended was very legalistic. If she missed even one Sunday, the pastor or one of the elders would come by—not out of concern that she might be ill or have a problem—but to scold her for being absent, and to get the offering she would have contributed had she been there. A bit overweight, and suffering from low self-esteem, she decided to enroll in the Masters program

at one of the theological seminaries in the city. She signed up for an elective course *Principles of Spiritual Growth*, an early version of the *SONSHIP for Africa* course.

Angela the evangelist, Angela the Christian worker, began to hear, really hear, the message of the Gospel—perhaps for the first time in her life. She heard of the radical love of the Father for his sons and daughters, that in Christ, daughters had the full rights of Sons (and an equal share of their Father’s “cows” — see *SONSHIP for Africa*, page S1-15). She heard that the Lord Jesus was always making intercession for her, making her so lovely to the Father that she looked as righteous as his Son to him. She heard that the Father loved her so much, that he had sent the Spirit of his Son into her heart to cry “Abba–Father” so that she would not forget how loved she was. She learned that she had ready access without fear or shame into her Father’s presence. I didn’t think she was listening. She just sat on the front row looking depressed.

But, as she began reading the “The Law Oriented Home vs. The Gospel Oriented Home” lesson, she was struck with the thought that she was a faithless woman who was ceaselessly angry at her children. She realized that she was trying to use them as a “source of righteousness” to make her look like a good mother, and an upstanding Christian. But, they constantly misbehaved, and so failed her. She realized that she had been despising them, and using them for her own ends.

One class period, when we suggested that it might be possible for someone to do a Masters of Divinity to “earn righteousness” before God and men, in a display of incredible honesty, she blurted out her first words in class—“*That is the only reason I am here.*” The Holy Spirit had shown her the wickedness of her heart, but, he had not done it through admonitions about how one “*ought* to love their children,” or how one *ought* to do anything. It was the love of God that broke her stubborn will, and melted her hardened heart. Up to this point, she had intellectualized the love of God for her. Now, she *believed*

it. She had trusted in the sufficiency of Christ's work for her, but that "decision" was a decade old. She hadn't realized what Schaeffer called "the present value of the blood of Christ." Now she was believing the Gospel, and listening to the Spirit's cry of "Abba!" in her heart. Now she was taking up that cry as her own, and calling God, "Baba"—Swahili for "Daddy." Angela is a new person. Her children and husband say they hardly recognize her. She is amazed how tenderly she loves them, and how the knowledge of the Father's love for her, enables her to nurture them. Angela invited my wife to come to their ministry office on Thursdays, and take the female staff through the *SONSHIP* course. She had to "tell the news."

The old Angela is a "type" of Christian. What is interesting about her story is that she was, and is, a Biblically literate Christian who had memorized the Scriptures about anger, about not provoking your children to wrath, and about walking in the Spirit. She had even been trained in how to share a tract on walking in the Spirit. Her problem was that she was trying to obey God in her own strength. Her focus was on commandment, not on Christ, and the frustration of her repeated failures had set her on a downward course. Simple Gospel faith, nothing new, novel or spectacular, just simple trust in the Father's love, the Son's righteousness, and the Spirit's power changed her life, and keeps changing it by "the hearing of faith."

3. "Gordon" and Gossip Gordon is on the staff of a worldwide missionary agency and has been justifiably proud of their recent record of successful recruitment and expansion. Known as a "grace mission" that specializes in renewal training with key Christian leaders around the world, there is ample opportunity for spiritual pride to creep in, and with it, the tendency in conversations with others to boast about the mission and, make negative comparisons, and offhand remarks about the problems of other mission organizations.

The Holy Spirit has been working on Gordon lately, showing him that gossip is Gospel unbelief, an idolatrous form of spirituality that puts self at the center. Gossip, he has seen, actually substitutes for Christ's righteousness in the heart. Gordon has confessed his problem, and noted that when he gossips about another person, or another mission, he gets the same "warm feeling" as when he believes the Gospel. Either gossip or the Gospel can "clothe him" and make him feel righteous. "I have a gossiping heart," he admits, "and it makes me feel good to confess someone else's sins for them." Gordon has begun to listen to himself talk, and be conscious of his thought processes. Many times, when he feels the urge to tear down the reputation of another person, he "looks at Christ" and surrenders to his righteousness.

And more, the Spirit is showing him that just avoiding gossip is "negative love." The times when these temptations arise, are a good time to find something edifying to say about the person or the organization—and to pray for them. The Gospel frees Gordon up so that he does not need to use people. It also empowers him to love them. The law can tell us that gossip is a sin, and if we remember the law, we can clamp our hand over our mouth and be silent. But silence does not fulfill the higher law of love. Speech that edifies, does. What goes on in the heart in regard to righteousness is what God is interested in, and when we believe the Gospel in these practical ways, it not only gives great pleasure to his heart, but glory to his name as well.

4. "Leonard" and Lust When Leonard was ten years old, his father introduced him to pornographic magazines. At thirteen, he was dropped off at a brothel with forty dollars and instructions to "go in and become a man." In high school, Leonard made a profession of faith in Christ, but discovered that his newfound relationship with Jesus was not able to touch his addiction to pornography and the constellation of sins that go with it. After gradu-

ation from college, Leonard got a job as a physical education instructor in a Christian school. Skilled in the use of computers, he began using them to feed his pornographic addiction on the Internet. This led to a number of affairs with local girls of his own age—fortunately, not with any of the students he was coaching. Leonard met and married Renny, a bright young woman who was attracted to his good looks and winsome personality. She had no idea that he was addicted to pornography, or that he was engaging in extramarital relations, until it was discovered by members of their church. Leonard was fired from his job, and Renny moved back home with her parents. This left Leonard home alone with the Internet. At that time, he was referred to me by his pastor for counseling via e-mail. Before my renewal, I had struggled with pornography, and my willingness to share that with a men's group in Leonard's church led to this referral. Leonard had tried only one approach to his problem—human effort to keep the law: *"This is sin, you ought to stop doing it!"* Not surprisingly, that approach had not helped (Col. 2:21). It only managed to stir up his sin (Rom. 7:11).

With my background, and some unrecognized pride in my victory status, it was difficult to have compassion for Leonard. I dreaded every letter, for most contained a fresh revelation of new sin. He was so charming, that at one point, he talked Renny into moving back in with him—over the strong objection of her parents. Soon, however, she left again, disgusted to find that he had spent the night in a car in the parking lot with a girl he had met in the adjacent shopping mall. As difficult as it was, I kept reminding Leonard of Christ's love for him, and praying for the Spirit to give me love for him. I kept pointing him to the righteousness of Christ, and at times, brutally showing him how his sexual sin was the acting out of much deeper sin. He could see that until the deeper issues were faced, he would never be able live in purity.

What was Leonard's "root sin?" Self-love—intense self-love. More than any person I have known, he was ready to satisfy his desires, no matter the pain it caused his wife or

others. He had a vile ability to use everyone and everything for his own pleasure. After a year (including meeting he and his wife on a trip to the USA), I told him flatly that he needed to see a Christian psychiatrist who could help him surface, and face, the deeper causes of his sin. He was angry, but complied. For a year, Leonard showed remarkable improvement, but an e-mail from his wife just two months ago let me know that he is struggling again. His therapist has been faithful to expose his root sin-patterns—radical self-love and the clever ways he manipulates people—habits learned in childhood.

The question could be asked, is Leonard a regenerate person? There are passages that could be cited to give an emphatic “No!” (I Cor. 6:11). Others might lead us to conclude that he is in a classic Romans 7 struggle with his flesh and one particular form of sin. For some months we have not been in touch, and I fear the worst. Is he afraid of hearing another admonition to “examine himself to see if he is in the faith?” (II Cor. 13:5) He needs to do that. Beneath his acting-out sexually, there is an ugly substrate in his personality—a need to hurt others that manifests itself in cutting remarks that come out of nowhere—a testy self-righteousness that is barely masked by a shallow winsomeness that can turn to ice in an instant.

What is our responsibility to Leonard? It is to keep giving him the Gospel, keep calling him to repentance, and, his fruit being what it is, insisting that he reexamine the validity of his profession (Gal. 5:19). With all that said, we must not lose sight of David’s assurance that “if the Lord should mark iniquities, who should stand?” (Ps. 130:3) The hard fact is, saved or lost, *none of us* keeps the Royal Law of love. We simply manifest our lovelessness in different ways. This we know: the decision as to the true state of Leonard’s soul belongs to the all-wise, all-knowing God. The Gospel of grace is able to deliver him—and us—from our bondages to sin. But, for deliverance to come, the Gospel must be truly believed in an ongoing way.

A year ago, this story had a happy ending. Now it is sad one—or is it the end? For the time being, because of Leonard's failure to lay hold of Christ (whether his need is justification or sanctification), he remains a slave of sin. What shall become of him? We have an expression in English which refers to capture by the police: "he was caught by the long arm of the law." But the moral law offers no solutions—only the prohibition ("don't") and condemnation if you fail. Leonard has been beyond the reach of the law since age ten, but he will never be out of the reach of grace. We remember Thomas Boston's words:

It is by faith the believer derives gracious influences from Jesus Christ. . . . if the saint's faith lie dormant and inactive, then all the rest of the graces will become dim, and seem ready to be extinguished. In consequence whereof, depraved nature will gather strength and become active (Boston, 1964, 299).

5. Joe and the Struggle to Pray Brennan Manning is a married ex-Catholic priest whose specialty is teaching about God's love. In his book "Abba's Child," he relates the story of an old man named Joe who refused to be "complicated" in the matter of conversing with Christ. Brennan tells about Joe in the context of expounding John 13:23–25. Protestants will have to forgive his Catholic overtones, but we offer the story with no apology for its doctrinal or emotional content. After reviewing Leonard's case, we need the encouragement.

There was reclining on Jesus' breast one of His disciples, whom Jesus loved. Simon Peter therefore gestured to him, and said to him, "Tell us who it is of whom He is speaking." He, leaning back thus on Jesus' breast, said to Him, "Lord, who is it?"
– John 13:23-25

Manning writes:

To read John 13:23-25 without faith is to read it without profit. To risk the passionate life, we must be "affected by" Jesus as John was; we must engage His experience with our lives rather than with our memories. Until I lay my head on Jesus' breast, listen to His heartbeat, and personally appropriate the Christ-experience of John's eye-witness, I have only a *derivative* spirituality. My cunning impostor will borrow John's moment of intimacy and attempt to convey it as if it were my own.

Once I related the story of an old man dying of cancer. The old man's daughter had asked the local priest to come and pray with her father. When the priest arrived, he found the man lying in bed with his head propped up on two pillows and an empty chair beside his bed. The priest assumed that the old fellow had been informed of his visit. "I guess you were expecting me," he said.

"No, who are you?"

"I'm the new associate at your parish," the priest replied. "When I saw the empty chair, I figured you knew I was going to show up."

"Oh yeah, the chair," said the bedridden man. "Would you mind closing the door?"

Puzzled, the priest shut the door.

"I've never told anyone this, not even my daughter," said the man, "but all my life I have never known how to pray. At the Sunday Mass I used to hear the pastor talk about prayer, but it always went right over my head. Finally I said to him one day in sheer frustration, 'I get nothing out of your homilies on prayer.'

"'Here,' says my pastor reaching into the bottom drawer of his desk. 'Read this book by Hans Urs von Balthasar. He's a Swiss theologian. It's the best book on contemplative prayer in the twentieth century.'

"Well, Father," says the man, "I took the book home and tried to read it. But in the first three pages I had to look up twelve words in the dictionary. I gave the book back to my pastor, thanked him, and under my breath whispered 'for nothing'."

"I abandoned any attempt at prayer," he continued "until one day about four years ago my best friend said to me, 'Joe, prayer is just a simple matter of having a conversation with Jesus. Here's what I suggest. Sit down on a chair, place an empty chair in front of you, and in faith see Jesus on the chair. It's not spooky because He promised, 'I'll be with you all days.' Then just speak to Him and listen in the same way you're doing with me right now.'

"So, Padre, I tried it and I've liked it so much that I do it a couple of hours every day. I'm careful though. If my daughter saw me talking to an empty chair, she'd either have a nervous breakdown or send me off to the funny farm."

The priest was deeply moved by the story and encouraged the old guy to continue on the journey. Then he prayed with him, anointed him with oil, and returned to the rectory.

Two nights later the daughter called to tell the priest that her daddy had died that afternoon.

"Did he seem to die in peace?" he asked.

"Yes, when I left the house around two o'clock, he called me over to his bedside, told me one of his corny jokes, and kissed me on the cheek. When I got back from the store an hour later, I found him dead. But there was something strange, Father. In fact beyond strange, kinda weird. Apparently just before Daddy died, he leaned over and rested his head on a chair beside his bed" (Manning 1994, 125-28).

Oh, that we Protestants had a faith as simple and unaffected as that of Joe the Catholic!

It was an intimate faith that, like the beloved Apostle's, could lean on Jesus' breast; and unashamed, like a child, he put a trusting head on the lap of the One who loved him in his moment of dying—even as he entered into Jesus' real presence in heaven. As the *Heidelberg Catechism* asked: "*What is my only comfort in life and in death?*"

That I am not my own, but belong—body and soul, in life and in death—to my faithful Savior Jesus Christ. He has fully paid for all my sins with his precious blood, and has set me free from the tyranny of the devil. He also watches over me in such a way that not a hair can fall from my head . . . (*Ecumenical* 1987, 11).

The Apostle's faith, and Joe's, confirm Dabney's observation that the Scriptures "*describe faith by almost every imaginable active figure. It is a 'looking' (Isa. 65:22), a 'receiving' (Jn. 1:12,13), an 'eating' of Him' (Jn. 6:54), a 'coming' (Jn. 5:40), an 'embracing' (Heb. 11:13), a 'fleeing unto,' a 'laying hold of' (Heb. 6:18),*" and, we could add another, "*a leaning*" (1972, 605–06; John 13:25).

Faith is a *noun* (belief) which has specific content—Christ, and an *activity* (trusting) which has a definite object—Christ. Faith in Jesus' blood and righteousness has the power both to *justify* and *sanctify*. Jesus' "great commission" to the Apostle Paul includes both:

I am sending you to them to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive *forgiveness of sins* and a place among those who are *sanctified by faith in me* (Acts 26:17b, 18, emphasis mine).

Faith is life-transforming because it is God's appointed instrument for: [1] our continual cleansing by the blood of Christ (1 Jn. 1:9), [2] a constant supply of the power of the Spirit in our lives (Gal. 3:5), and [3] our assurance that we are indeed the beloved children of our Abba-Father and as such, full heirs to all the rights and privileges of the children of God (Gal. 4:7).

Faith, this Gospel faith, renewed a pastor, his family and his congregation; turned a mother's heart toward her husband and children; gave a mission executive the power to overcome gossip, and taught a dying man to pray. And, if exercised, this faith will yet work in a young man who at this writing is a slave of and being destroyed by his own lusts, free him from his bondage, make him a new creature in Christ, return him to his estranged wife, and thereby bring great glory to God and blessing to others. If simple faith in Christ can do all *that*, what can it do for your soul, your family and your church? *What can it do for Africa?*

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

From the beginning, we have been on a quest for the “missing means” of sanctification. As Ezekiel promised, God’s New Covenant family has an ability to obey him that stony-hearted Israel lacked. We have new hearts of flesh, indwelt by the Holy Spirit, and with our eyes fixed on Christ, we are able to “walk in his ways and keep his commandments” (36:26, 27).

We learned that sanctification can be defined as: a *state* of grace in which we stand as God’s “set-apart” ones, as a *process* of dying to sin and living to righteousness, and, as an *event* in time in which we make a choice to follow the good or yield to evil.

We have discovered that *faith* is the instrumental means of sanctification. Put another way, *our trust in the blood and righteousness of Christ is the συναψις (synapse) of sanctification*—the point of at which our weak wills are energized by the sanctifying impulse of the indwelling Holy Spirit. It is in response to our faith that God “keeps giving” the Spirit, that God-glorifying purposes fill our minds, and that loving words and actions flow from our lives to bless others (Gal. 3:5). The more constantly we “fix our eyes on Christ” (Heb. 12:2), the more our flesh will be subdued, and the more frequent these “sanctification moments” will become. Growth comes in proportion to the exercise of our faith (p. 154). It is faith in Christ that assures us before the Father that we belong to him, and sanctification occurs within the sphere of our sonship as we “know and rely” on the love the Father has for us (p. 139ff). Obedience is motivated by love. “Holy works” done to obey law as law, or meet the demands of duty are fleshly attempts to bypass Christ and the Spirit. They are the works of slaves, not sons, and as such, only mimic “the obedience that comes from faith” (Rom. 1:5; Gal. 3:5).

We have learned that it is a grave mistake to place confidence in the mechanical use of any of the “external means” (“outward,” or “dependent” means) of growth, be they the

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We have learned that it is a grave mistake to place confidence in the mechanical use of any of the “external means” (“outward,” or “dependent” means) of growth, be they the

works of the law, the commandments of men, the praying of prayers, the reading of the Scriptures, or any of the motions of worship. Robert Shaw has told us clearly that:

The *impulsive* or moving cause of sanctification is the free grace of God.
The *meritorious* cause is the blood and righteousness of Christ.
The *efficient* cause is the Holy Spirit.
The *instrumental* cause is faith in Christ.
The *external means* are: the Word, read and preached, the sacraments, and prayer. . . providences. . . (Shaw 1974, 144, numbering and Scripture references omitted).

Apart from conscious faith in Christ blessed of the Spirit, the external means are lifeless activities—empty rituals which neither please God nor bear fruit unto sanctification.

Here we restate our Biblical paradigm of growth in holiness:

Premise: Faith in Christ produces sanctification. (Acts 26:17, 18; Rom. 1:5; Gal. 3:1-5)

First: Sanctification is obedience to the law of God. (1 Cor. 7:19)

Second: The law of God is fulfilled by love. (Matt. 22:37ff; Rom. 13:8ff; Gal. 5:6; 2 Jn. 6)

Third: Love comes not by law, but by the Spirit. (Rom. 8:3, 4; Gal. 5:22)

Fourth: The Spirit comes through faith in Christ. (Gal. 3:5)

Fifth: Faith in Christ produces the likeness of Christ. (Jn. 15:3-5; II Cor. 3:16-18)

Sixth: The likeness of Christ *is* sanctification. (II Cor. 3:16-18; Gal. 5:22, 23)

Conclusion: Sanctification is by faith in Christ. (Acts 26:17, 18; Rom. 1:5; Gal. 3:1-5)

It was by a “faith hearing” of the Gospel that we were justified (ἀκοῆς πίστεως), and it is by the “faith hearing” of the Gospel that we are being sanctified (Gal. 3:5). Thus, to our question “*what is the one thing you should do more of, to grow in holiness?*” we answer simply, “*believe more.*” To grow, we “preach the Gospel to ourselves,” and to lead others to grow in grace, we preach the Gospel to them.

Never on our own, but always acted upon by the Spirit, we exercise this ongoing faith for sanctification, and, in spite of the weakness and imperfection of our faith, the great design and desire of God’s heart for the New Covenant of the Gospel comes to pass:

*“Then, the nations know that I am the Lord, when I show myself holy,
through you, before their eyes.” — Ezekiel 36:23*



APPENDIXES

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APPENDIX A

A Little Letter to Law-Lovers

If we are among those who claim a great love for the law, it would be good and wise for us to examine our hearts to be sure that all of our law-loving and law-delighting has not becoming an unhealthy hobby—that we are not grinding some sort of theological axe. That is always a danger, especially if we are quite sure that we are not only consummate law-lovers, but exceptional law-keepers. But surely, if holiness is what we really desire, there could be no harm in asking ourselves:

"Do I approach the law with the heartfelt prayer: "Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me and know my thoughts; see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the everlasting way."? -- Psalm 139:23,24 Is my love for the law causing me pain? Am I allowing, even encouraging, the law to ferret out the secret pollutions and perversities of my heart—the things that plague me, drag me down, and spoil my ability to bring maximum glory to God? Is the dazzling purity of the law humbling me and bringing me under conviction for my sins so that I loathe them, repent of them, and turn away from them to Christ? Are both Tables of Law doing their work in me?"

Consider, if you will, these musings, these mental ramblings by the author as I let the law into my soul for some diagnostic inquiry. There are volumes written on "what is required and what is forbidden in the Ten Commandments." Many of us memorized the *Westminster Shorter Catechism* as children, and so that body of divinity is a given for us. But, how does the law judge me specifically in my calling as a Christian, husband, father, brother in Christ and neighbor to all men? (The reader is, of course, free to take the first person pronouns for himself, but rest assured, none is more needy of God's mercy than me.)

Is the First Table at work in me?

Love the Lord Your God. Do I keep this sum of the First Table? Do I really and truly love God with all my heart, with all my soul, with all my mind and with all my strength? Do I love the Father the way Jesus loved the Father and wants me to love him? Do I keep perfectly the first four Commandments which tells me how I may love God?

I. No Other Gods. Do I delight that I do not take the names of pagan gods on my lips, but fail to see the veritable collection of them in my heart—some bearing brand names? Do I see that vast store room in my soul where old idols from the past are kept—that collection of my passing fancies that lie discarded, forgotten, but ever being added to, as some new delight pushes yet another once-alluring, now faded god out of the tiny chamber of my heart? "If any man loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him" (1 John).

II. No Idols. Does remembering this command fill me with self-congratulation because I will not allow a Hindu image or a painting of Jesus in my house, or, does it show me that I have a Hindu-heart—a veritable idol factory that churns them out by the

hour, each one carefully designed by me to bring pleasure to me, the Chief-Idol? Does it show me my demandingness and my pretensions to godness? Does it show me that my love of the praise of men *is* idolatrous self-worship, and that basking in, or desiring to gain the acclaim of others is the sin of the Pharisees—the one class of people on this earth that God in the flesh considered the most despicable? Does this law warn me that using the glorious Gospel as a tool to promote myself and gain glory for myself is the most detestable crime against God a man can commit?

III. Honor God's name. Does this commandment show me that while I may be scrupulous in my use of the names and attributes of God, that my pride in that obedience, and my censoriousness towards, rather than grief over, others who are not so careful is in itself a dishonoring of God's Name? Does it show me that my deep need for the adulation of the other Law-lovers in my club, is an abuse of The Name since I receive the praise and honor due only unto him? Does it show me that if I take pride in my repentances, that rather than being sweet incense to God, they are a stench in his nostrils?

IV. Honor God's Day. Does this law show me that although I do not work with my body on the Sabbath, that, in the course of the day, before, during and after worship, my heart and mind rarely cease from their preoccupations with worldly cares and pleasures? Does it show me that "keeping the day holy" excludes my unholy pride in keeping it, and my despisal of those whom I believe to be dishonoring it?

This is the First Table of the law. Is it showing me my lack of love for God, and my desperate need of the cleansing blood of Jesus and the renewing grace of the Holy Spirit? If not, I am deceiving myself, and am certainly no true law-lover, for I love only those parts of it which I can keep.

Is the Second Table at work in me?

Love Your Neighbor As Yourself. Is the summary of the Second Table searching me? Do I love people or use people? Do I love my neighbor as I love myself? (Matthew 22) Do I love him as Christ loved me? (John.13) Or, is my neighbor a tool for the furtherance of my own good? If I do him good, do I tuck the memory of that good away for future use as righteousness? Or do I hasten to share the good news of my goodness with others? When a man or woman reminds me of some good I have done to them, am I pleased at their worthy sense of recall, or am I so self-forgetful that I am surprised at their remembrance and embarrassed by their praise? Do I make the righteousness of my wife and children my business because I love them, or, do I use them as extensions of my own righteousness, laboring to present them faultless to prevent their sins and failures from shaming me?

V. Honor Human Authority. Do I congratulate myself on honoring my parents, even though they do not feel loved and cared for by me? Do I expend vast amounts of mental and physical energy in devising ways to despise or defeat the obedience I should render to the ecclesiastical and civil authorities God in his providence has placed over me? (Rom. 13) Do I see the honest paying of my taxes as a way to show love to my neighbor?

VI. No Murder. I am innocent of murder, but do I hate? Do I "kill" others by my manifold despisals of them based on their color, tribe, nationality, religion, or doctrinal stripe within my own faith? Am I, like Paul, "innocent of the blood of all men" (Acts 20), or have I withheld the Gospel from my neighbor, either from spite (as did Jonah), or from the fear of their disapproval—even though the Gospel is their only hope for life now or escape from the wrath to come?

VII. No Sexual Immorality. Am I faithful to my wife physically, while my heart engages in multiple dalliances with "mental mistresses." Do I love the lovely ones among my sisters in Christ purely, or do I use them—as the unknowing victims and mental playgrounds for my lust? Do I love my wife with the dying love of Christ for his Bride (Ephesians 6), or do I neglect *that* part of the law to concentrate on "making her spotless" by my law to the point that she does not *feel* loved, cherished, or affirmed by me? As her leader, has my heart become so cold and loveless that her heart has been made a barren wasteland devoid of any hope that she will experience genuine tenderness from me? Am I serving her in love, or using her up as a man burns a candle? Do I encourage her heart to love Christ and his Gospel by my sorrow over my sins, and my joy over the love of Christ for me, or does my soul process the truth of God like a machine and turn the Gospel into a devouring sword? Does my crying "Abba-Father!" stir up her faith to do the same, or is my religion a burdensome set of rules and regulations that disheartens and discourages those around me?

VIII. No Stealing. I do not steal, but am I always on the lookout for ways to "juggle the books" in my financial dealings with others so that I can get the upper hand? Am I a giver or a taker? In regard to the things God has given me, am I generous, ready to share, and eager to find a way to bless others, or, am I a niggardly man who looks for loopholes through which I can escape the clear obligation to love and materially bless them?

IX. No Lying. I do not bear false witness against my neighbor, but am I a liar who is committed to protecting myself, my image and my reputation from blame? Do I present half the truth as the whole truth in order to further my reputation as a person who always fulfills his duty to God and others? Or, when I sin, can I admit my faults and failures to others because I take conscious refuge in the perfection of Another, the One who died and who ever lives to intercede for me? Do I love to tell the truth about other people's sins? Do I use their unrighteousness as a basis for my righteousness?

X. No Coveting. Do I envy the physical beauty, energy, intellect, spiritual giftedness, natural talents, breeding or possessions of others, secretly wishing they belonged to me? Do I hide my envy of, and desire for, these things by self-righteously belittling either the things or those that possess them? Or, do I delight in, commend for, build up, and seek to develop God's good gifts and graces in others, so that they are empowered to bring more and more glory to God by the use of them? This is the Second Table of the law.

This is the law of God. The musings have been extemporaneous. No Bible or commentary were needed since the law was memorized a many years ago, is taught regularly, and since the Spirit has written it upon my heart as he has on yours. The difficult part is "reading our hearts." To do that, we must have an absolute confidence in the unconditional love of the Father for us. Without that, we haven't the courage.

You will notice that we majored on the Second Table, and we did so for several reasons: [1] Obedience to the Second Table is a good measure of one's obedience to the first, and an indication of whether or not he is converted: "If a man says he loves God and hates his neighbor, he is a liar... anyone who cannot love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen" (1 Jn. 4:20). [2] Our love to one another is the way the world measures the validity of our profession: "So shall you prove to be my disciples if you have love one toward another." [3] Our observable love to one another is so radically unlike the world's way of relating, it testifies to the truth that Jesus is indeed God's Son and the Savior of the world (Jn. 17:21). [4] When we have loved our neighbor, we have kept the whole law: Rom. 13:8-10; Gal. 5:14. [5] Because as regards the needy people God has put in our lives, we love *him* through them—"Inasmuch as you have done it to one of the least of these my brothers, you have done it unto me" (Matt. 25:40). Verse 45 states the converse, "have not done it. . . have not done it to me."

And now, a question for you the reader. Ask yourself: "As I have read these musings from the heart of another, have I seen myself, or has my mind been frantically hunting around for all sorts of excuses and all manner of means for defending my righteousness? Have I delighted in discovering faults in the author's style of writing, or his clumsy oversights in the exposition of the law? Have I used his exposition only to call up remembrances of others' sins, or, have I let the law of God do its good work of piercing my heart so that I will run in repentance to the mercy seat of Christ for cleansing and empowering by the Holy Spirit to do in me what I can obviously not do for myself? Do I actually keep this law I claim to love and delight in? Do I remember that Jesus did not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance?"

How did I know to ask these questions of you? It wasn't the least bit difficult. At the same time I was meditating on and writing down the demands of the law on me, my flesh was struggling to recall and rehearse my many obediences to it. And, my memory was churning up the countless omissions and commissions of others—together with a catalogue of their flaws and faults to distract my conscience, to get the spotlight off myself. So, brave Christian Soldier that I am, my heart, rather than willfully exposing itself to the Sword, was frantically strapping on the "Breastplate of Self-Righteousness" and throwing up the "Shield of Defensiveness" in a futile attempt to protect itself against the Spirit's mortal blows—the true-truth about me. But, the law came, and I died. Praise God for that death! When you and I are willing to die to ourselves, die to our righteousness and be clothed in what Luther called the "wholly alien righteousness of Christ," we live. We are co-crucified with Christ, and become living testimonies to what the law can do in the life of a *believer*.

I don't know about you, but after "gazing into the perfect law," I have a hard time walking away and forgetting the monster I saw in the mirror. (Jas. 1:23) And with *that* perspective, to engage in a debate about the validity of the "the third use" is sheer folly. We can't keep it. But, it *can* lead us over and over again to sue for mercy at the Throne of Grace.

John W. Long, Jr.
Recovering Pharisee

APPENDIX B
THE THREE LEVELS OF THE LAW

SOLVING THE MYSTERY: WHAT IS TRUE HOLINESS?

LEVEL I

EXTERNAL OBEDIENCE NOT SINNING OUTWARDLY

The Law of Moses (MAJORED ON "DON'TS")

IT WAS SAID IN OLD TIME . . .

DON'T WORSHIP AN IDOL, DON'T WORK ON THE SABBATH DAY, DON'T KILL, DON'T COMMIT ADULTERY, DON'T STEAL, DON'T LIE, DON'T, DON'T, DON'T...

SO, WE THINK: "Today I didn't kill anybody or rob a bank or sleep with anyone else's wife or get drunk or tell a lie, or... Therefore I have done well; I am holy, truly. I have kept the law!"

THE TRUTH: That's a good start, but the Pharisees did that, and they were just "SIN MANAGERS!" We may look good on the outside (so does a rotten egg), but if our hearts are corrupt and out of fellowship with God, we haven't begun to "keep the law."

People "obey law" for all sorts of reasons—fear of punishment, a desire to impress others, etc. rather than because they love God and others.

The Pharisees "kept the Law" externally and then congratulated themselves for being righteous. But when Jesus looked into their hearts he said, "Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You clean the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence.... Woe to you.... you hypocrites! You are like whitewashed tombs which look beautiful on the outside but on the inside are full of dead men's bones and everything unclean. In the same way, on the outside you appear to people as righteous but on the inside you are full of hypocrisy and wickedness." — Matthew 23:25-28

SOULAW V LYP

LEVEL II

INTERNAL - HEART PURITY THE HEART / THOUGHT / MOTIVE LEVEL

The Sermon on the Mount (THE HEART)

BUT I SAY UNTO YOU . . .

DON'T LOVE THE WORLD; DON'T HATE OR DESPISE PEOPLE IN YOUR HEART; DON'T COVET; DON'T LUST; DON'T FAST AND PRAY TO BE SEEN BY MEN, ETC.

SO, WE THINK: "My heart is perfectly pure! Today, I didn't hate anyone, covet anyone's possessions, think vain thoughts, or even have lust in my heart! Truly, I have kept the Law!"

THE TRUTH: Don't congratulate yourself yet! Yes, if you have a pure heart, you're a giant step ahead of the Pharisees, but even so, you have not yet even begun to keep the law! Why? Because:

1. Holiness is much more than performing at Levels I and II/ (outward obedience and inward purity) True holiness involves moving from the self-centeredness and self-love our flesh loves to a radically new way of thinking and acting.

2. True holiness is loving God and others. We can keep all the commandments and maintain pure hearts, but we haven't yet "kept the law" because we haven't loved anybody yet! We talk a lot about "holiness," and "keeping the law," but this is the Law: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, strength and mind—and love your neighbor as yourself." (Deut. 6:5; Lev. 19:18; Matt. 22:36ff) Do you do that? I see. Not too well. But love is a VERB—positive action! Godliness is not just "What should I avoid?" but, "How can I love?" Jesus calls us to live at Level III, the "New Law."

LEVEL III

LOVE IN ACTION FAITH EXPRESSED THROUGH LOVE

The "NEW LAW" — Loving as Jesus Loved Us

"A NEW COMMANDMENT I GIVE UNTO YOU, love one another as I have loved you." (Jn. 13:34f) "This is how we know what love is: Jesus laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers." (1 Jn. 3:16) The new standard is Jesus love for us—not our love for ourselves!

SO, WE THINK: "Oh, now I understand! I must try really hard to love God and love my neighbor. If I can succeed, then I will be a true lawkeeper!" No, wrong focus! God wants us to love, not keep laws. SEE: Gal. 5:6,13, 14!

THE TRUTH: God doesn't want us focusing on the law. "You are not under law!" Yes, we are to keep the law, but by looking at Jesus, not at the law. "Live by, be led by, walk in, keep in step with, and be controlled by" the Holy Spirit. His fruit is love! (Rom. 6:14)

Men: Holiness is not just avoiding lust; it is serving our sisters with pure hearts!

Women: Holiness is not just avoiding covetousness, but sharing what God has given us! 1 Jn. 3:17 (ref. the Eph. 4:28 principle: "Stop stealing; start working and giving!")

As we believe the Gospel, we keep getting the Spirit. As we live by the Spirit we love, and when we love, we keep the whole law! (Gal. 3:1f; Rom. 13:8-10) Love is our new heart in action—empowered by the Spirit to share the Gospel, reach out, to bind up, build up, bless, and edify others so that great glory goes to the Father! (Matt. 5:16) Anything less is not biblical holiness!

JESUS did not come to earth, die on a cross, rise from the dead, and send the Spirit to make us into "I don't" people, but into self-sacrificing lovers of people like he was! SPECIFICALLY, how does this love look? ➡

APPENDIX C
THE LOOK OF LOVE; AUTHENTIC CHRISTLIKENESS

"THE LOOK OF LOVE" ✧ AUTHENTIC CHRISTLIKENESS ✧

In Order to BE LIKE JESUS, We Must LOVE LIKE JESUS!

THIS DIAGRAM pictures the flow of Jesus' love in five stages. His love for people was redemptive; ours is not. But, as we live in reliance on the Holy Spirit, we will "imitate God" by loving others in Jesus-like ways.

1 John 4:9-13 This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us.

Ephesians 5:1,2 Be imitators of God, as dearly loved children, and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God

1 John 3:16-18 This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And so we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers. Dear children let us not love with words... but with action and in truth

JESUS' STYLE OF RELATING—AND OURS BY THE SPIRIT

OUR NATURAL (FLESHLY) STYLE OF RELATING

Unity, Oneness, Openness and Intimacy With God and Others (Jn. 17:21-23; Col. 2:2)

Shallow Relationships, Surface Communication, Resistance to True Intimacy

Committed to Dying to Self to Live For and Bless Others

Resistance to Pain, Commitment to Self-Protection

Eager to Bear Others' Burdens "Let me carry it" Lk. 10:33ff
"When they love someone, people will not fold their arms" — Oromo, Ethiopia

Avoidance of the Burdens of Others "passing by on the other side" Lk. 10:30ff

Tenderness of Heart "When you hurt, I hurt" (Rom. 12:15; 1 Cor. 12:25, 26)

Hardness of Heart "It's your problem; it's not my problem!"

JESUS looks at and talks to people. Gives them dignity. Blind Men: Matt. 20:32; John 9:1,2

THE DISCIPLES talk about, not to, the blind man. (Jn. 9:1) When we depersonalize people (see but don't "look"), love dies.

LOVE'S ROOT: THE GOSPEL → FAITH → THE SPIRIT'S FRUIT

LOVE LIKE THIS ONLY FLOWS FROM A SUPER-NATURAL SOURCE.

THIS IS THE WAY WE "LOVE" OTHERS APART FROM THE HOLY SPIRIT'S POWER.

APPENDIX D

"Billy the Kid" – A Case Study in the Confusion of Means

Law vs. Gospel Parenting

In my generation it has been fashionable to use the Bible as a form of parental discipline, and ostensibly, as a means of sanctification: *"Go to your room and read this verse until you understand what you have done!"* Or worse, *"Go to your room and memorize this verse; David said, 'Thy Word have I hid in my heart that I might not sin against Thee!'"*

Although we are speaking in the context of a human family, look at the family as a system, as a paradigm of your extended family, your clan, your church family or denominational family. That is, don't miss the implications of this illustration to your ministry as a pastor, Sunday School or Bible teachers, or in whatever context you desire to communicate the Gospel of grace. My African brothers and sisters will need to *"eat the mango and split out the pit,"* that is, get the meat, and transfer all the talk about American Presbyterianism to your own context. When you have done that, write out your version, and we'll include it in *SONSHIP for Africa*. Now, down to business:

Billy The Kid: Let's pretend, shall we, that we are Billy's mother. Billy is nine, and he has purloined a quarter (KSh.20/=) from our bedroom dressing table—and lied about it until we pressed him further. His admission of guilt has come, but not remorse. He is embarrassed for getting caught, but not sorry. The choices before us are two: We can imitate Moses on Mount Sinai, delivering the Law (with the usual accompaniment of parental thunder and lightening), or we can imitate Jesus on Mount Calvary and give the free offer of the Gospel to a sinner. What do we mean? We could tell Billy that "stealing is wrong" (which it surely is); that he has "broken the rule" (which he surely has); confine him to his room to "think about it" (which he surely should); have him read Exodus 20 until he is "genuinely sorry" (which he surely should be); and, tell him to "pray for God's forgiveness" (which he surely needs). Or, we could take another tack. What that other tack is, we'll not let on just yet. First things first:

1. Billy's Guilt Before God and Man Established

Let us not rationalize by saying, *"But it was only a quarter!"* Billy's heart is a childhood version of the Rich Young Ruler's. The boy is the infamous "Billy the Kid" of the 1860s American Wild West just waiting to happen. Let's take his sin seriously. How has he sinned?

Billy has broken not one, but several commandments directly, and, if you are guilty of one point, you are guilty of all (Jas. 2:10). Which commandments has he broken

directly? V. Honor Your Father and Your Mother; VIII. Thou Shalt Not Steal. IX. Thou Shalt Not Lie (actually it says "don't bear false witness," but we can technically hang him on that one too). X. Thou Shalt Not Covet. And, by implication? I. Thou Shalt Have No Other God's Before Me (Billy loved money more than God.), and, II. Thou Shalt Not Make or Bow Down To A Graven Image. Clearly, Billy is a law-breaker, a rule-violator.

But is that *all* Billy has done—break rules? What about *the law behind the law*, the law that speaks to *the sin beneath the sin*? What about the Royal Law of love that judges Billy's sin of self love? *That*, is Billy's real problem, and unless we, as his parent, deal with *that*, we may get him to comply with the rule, but we will only have made a good Pharisee of him, nothing more. "Man looks on the outward appearance, but God looks on the heart" (1 Sam. 16:7). I believe that we want more for our children, our parishioners and our pupils. Don't you? "My son, give me your heart" (Prov. 23:26).

Let's think about the two ways we might deal with Billy's sin: Law and Gospel.

The Two Ways: Law and Gospel

1. The Law: Since stealing "is wrong," (it breaks the rule), what is wrong with sending Billy to his room to read Exodus 20 "until he is truly sorry?" It's not a wrong instruction, *per se*, but it *is* a terribly incomplete one. We haven't touched Billy's heart. He is not sorry, embarrassed, but not sorry. Billy doesn't see that *he is a sinner*, only that he has committed *a sin*, i.e. that he has broken a rule. There is a big difference! Billy's problem, you see, is not that he lacks sufficient information about the error of his ways. Do you think that giving him more law in bigger doses will change him? What if we threatened him with such awful punishment that he never stole another quarter from our room? Would Billy then be sanctified? What about Billy as an adult? Suppose we gave him \$10,000,000.00, and he never stole anything from anybody ever again? Is he a sanctified man? We would have to hand it to him, he *has* kept the law. Would we be satisfied with that obedience? If we say "yes," we're in big trouble. [At this point, please reread a little J. C. Ryle (Ch. 2, p. 46) and think about how *he* might approach Billy in this situation.] What does Billy really need?

2. The Gospel: Whether Billy is converted or unconverted, he still needs several things that all sinners need. If he is not converted, he needs to be converted *in addition* to these.

First, Billy needs the Law—all of it. He needs to see his sin. If the law is to be effective in leading Billy to Christ in repentance (which Christians who steal need too), he must see that he is using you, his parent, and loving himself more than you. In other words, he has done a worse thing than merely breaking the rule about stealing. The *reason* that stealing is a sin, is that it is a refusal to love. You make your neighbor your victim. You use him rather than love him. Jesus, James and Paul all said that the whole law is summed up in the commandment to love (*cf.* Romans 13:8-10 for Paul's version). Billy needs to see that he is a "lover of self," and not a lover of God. He loves himself

more than you, his parent. That is why he uses you and dishonors God by stealing from you. Thus, God is not glorified by Billy's life.

Second, Billy needs the Gospel. Billy needs to know that he cannot keep the law, and that the law cannot therefore give him a right relationship with God. And more, he needs to know that even if he stops stealing, it doesn't mean that he is either saved or sanctified. Billy needs to see the Cross of Christ which is the place of refuge and cleansing for sinners, the place of atonement, the only basis of man's justification. And, Billy needs to know that faith in the blood of Jesus will not only cleanse him from his sin, but that an ongoing faith in Jesus will give him the power of the Holy Spirit to stop stealing ---and start loving God and others in the future. The Gospel offers Billy real forgiveness for his sin, and real power over his sin.

Third, Billy needs Christian Parenting. Notice that we didn't say "a Christian parent." You are that. We said, "Christian Parenting" which you will never give him by using the law as law or the Bible as punishment. Billy needs a parent who understands the difference between law and Gospel, and their relative power to sanctify. The law is spiritual, show him that. This is the Holy Spirit's pathway to the conscience, and your real goal for Billy is not that he be a strict keeper of rules, but that he be a tenderhearted lover of God, of his parents, and others.

The parent who assumes that mere external means can change Billy -- apart from a living, vital, conscious, heart-to-heart, saving and sanctifying relationship with Jesus, is wrong. Billy needs a parent who will say, *"Billy, honey, come here. Sit in my lap. Do you know that when I was ten, I took a quarter from my daddy's pants pocket."* We parents, you see, are sinners too. If we haven't stolen quarters from our parents or siblings or classmates, we have stolen something---or have been tempted to. We all have "Billy hearts!" So, let's confess that to our children. We *are* sinners, so let's "be sinners" with our children. Let's be parents who gladly admit that we need Jesus like our children need Jesus.

Having joined Billy as a sinner (instead of a self-righteous accuser), we can tell him what is *most* wrong about his stealing. The problem is not that he has broken a rule, but that he hasn't trusted his heavenly Father to provide his needs, and that in stealing from us, he has loved himself more than he has loved us. When you lovingly (not angrily) tell him that you don't feel that he loves you, he may bring forth the tears of repentance that bare commandments cannot produce. Tell him that you love him, and that God loves him, and that you want him to feel free to ask you for a quarter, and trust your love to give him what he needs. Show him that as the Holy Spirit gives us love for others, that we will have the desire to give to them! (1 Timothy 4:27: "He who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with his own hands, that he may have something to share with those in need.")

Lastly, and this is the most important part, we take Billy to Jesus in prayer together. We repent of our sins, maybe not the same surface sins as Billy's, but our root sin of self-love which we share with him. If Billy is not yet remorseful, pray the Gospel, and pray in his hearing that he will understand how great a gift the Father offers him, and the Cross of Christ is for him as a sinner. Look at Isaiah 53 together, or read the narrative of the crucifixion in John 19, and tell Billy what Jesus meant when he cried out, "It is

finished!" (vs. 30)—that your sins and his sins (if he is converted) nailed to the cross so that we bear them no more. Explain to him I John 1:9, and the role of confession for cleansing of the conscious and the renewing of our relationship with God and others. What they need is to know of the loving and free offer of a welcoming Father to forgive a transgression, the interceding Son ready and waiting to wash by his blood, and the power of the indwelling Spirit to empower new obedience as Christ is trusted.

A Final Word to All: *This* is "Christian parenting," and as you and I parent this way, the strong likelihood is that our children will grow up very much in love with such a Jesus, a Jesus who tenderizes their parents' hearts, and makes us into repent and forgiving people as he forgives our sins.

You may ask me: But what if the Gospel "doesn't work?" Oh, so the law does? But what if Billy is never sorry, never asks forgiveness, and never returns the quarter, what then? Forgive him, and keep giving him the Gospel in wise doses. You have nothing else, no other means. The Gospel is all you have, and it is all you need. Use it, for yourself. Patiently teach it to your children, and leave the results to God. They don't belong to you, they never did. They are not your possession; they are his. If they refuse his offer of grace, they will miss his love and merit his wrath. But be sure that from you, they get more than the law. Be sure that they get the Gospel—that they hear the Gospel in your mouth, and they see the Gospel transforming your life.

A Footnote for American Presbyterians: *Are we questioning the value of the Bible?* In saying that the Bible cannot change Billy apart from his faith, are we replaying the tired love affair the 1960s American church had with existentialism? In those days, liberal churchmen rejected the plenary verbal inspiration of Scripture, but found a way to stay in their pulpits (read, "keep their jobs"), by *talking about* the Bible while denying its objective revelatory character, and often, the validity of its miraculous content as well. They were very clever, these men. At our Presbytery youth camps when they had us out of the earshot of our conservative, Bible-believing pastors, they herded us impressionable teens into rooms and with weasel words told us, "*The Bible is only a book, paper and ink; it is not the Word of God until it becomes the Word of God to you!*" I was there. What was their objective? To lead us into a vital union with Christ as Savior and Lord? Hardly. They never talked about who Jesus was, only what the Bible was not. Their objective seemed to be the tearing down of our faith in the Scriptures.

Is that what we are doing here? God forbid. We are neither hawking philosophical existentialism, *or*, some spooky Christian mysticism. When we speak of the ineffectual character of external means of the Word, the Sacraments and Prayer apart from faith, we are proclaiming Biblical, New Covenant Christianity—good, old-fashioned, Pauline, Puritan, Presbyterian living union with Jesus Christ. We are *reasserting* a critically necessary emphasis that has been lost in our generation. Our well-meaning teachers in the 1960s overreacted to the rampant liberalism around them by placing such a strong emphasis on the value of the *bare external means*, that they neglected faith as the necessary *instrumental* means! One brave battle was fought and won, another was not recognized and lost.

And this generation has followed in their train. Today, we are content with *being right*. We are able guardians of the faith, and proud of our ability to defend it. But sound doctrine, confidence in the Scriptures and a profession that the moral law is good is not godly sanctification. It is certainly the fruit of godly sanctification, but it is not sanctifying. And, we have a real problem with spiritual pride. Spiritual pride that we believe those things is sin, and is de-sanctifying. Neither the Bible nor God's moral law can serve us as worthy substitutes for a true and lively faith, a vital, daily dependent, passionately loving communion with God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit—the Living Author of the Bible and the law. That is what we believe, and that is what we preach.

-JWL-

APPENDIX E

**UNDERSTANDING THE SINFULNESS OF SIN:
A SIN-KILLING WORKSHOP**

A SIN TO FIGHT

THE SINFUL BEHAVIOR: _____

(Pick from: anger, lying, gossip, sexual immorality, wife beating, stealing, gossip, tribalism, or drunkenness.)

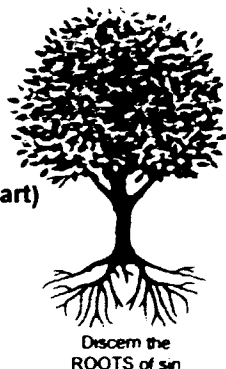
THINK: What entices a Christian into this sin?

A. EXTERNAL Forces (things outside him)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

B. INTERNAL Forces (the heart)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.



C. WHAT ARE THE GOALS of this sin? All behavior has a goal. What pleasure does it offer? *"Mchovya asali hachovyi mara moja."* (He who dips his finger in honey does not do it [only] once.)

- 1.
- 2.

THE SINFULNESS OF SIN

Sin is not merely breaking rules.
It is failure to love.

SONSHIP for Africa J.W. Long Jr. 1997

LAW → "DON'T!"

THIS SIN BREAKS WHICH COMMANDMENT?

(See next page) No. _____



WHAT METHODS do parents, pastors and teachers usually use to try to inhibit this sin?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

ACCORDING TO YOUR OBSERVATIONS, have these methods been successful? (circle one)

Yes No Sometimes

QUESTION: If someone *has* avoided this sin outwardly, has he necessarily "kept the law?"

Yes No

What type of "obedience" did he give?

Outward / Inward? Forced / Willing?

DOES GOD CARE, as long as we "obey?"

Certainly! God isn't pleased if our "obedience" is nothing more than the unwilling compliance of a hard heart that would rather sin if it could avoid the consequences. He wants our love and respect, not fear. (1 Jn. 4:16ff, Rom. 13:3,4; 8-10) The government will accept your tax payment no matter how you feel toward them. Your money satisfies them. But God wants our obedience to flow from a heart of love for him and others. "Man looks at the outside, but God looks on the heart." - 1 Sam. 16:7

GOSPEL → "LOVE!"

HOW DOES THIS SIN VIOLATE THE LAW OF LOVE? (Matt. 22) Describe it as a "failure to love?"

WHAT are the "Ripple Effects" of this sin?



- 1 On the SINNER?
- 2 On the VICTIM OF or PARTNER IN the sin?
- 3 On OTHER PEOPLE affected by the sin?
- 4 But, who is MOST INJURED? (p. 5-5, 2. 1b)

READ Rom. 7:4-6 and 8:12-16; 1 Tim. 1:3-11; Col. 2:21-23. What does Paul teach us about the relationship of law to obedience?

ACCORDING TO Gal. 3:2-5; 5:16,21 What is the Gospel's cure for this sin?

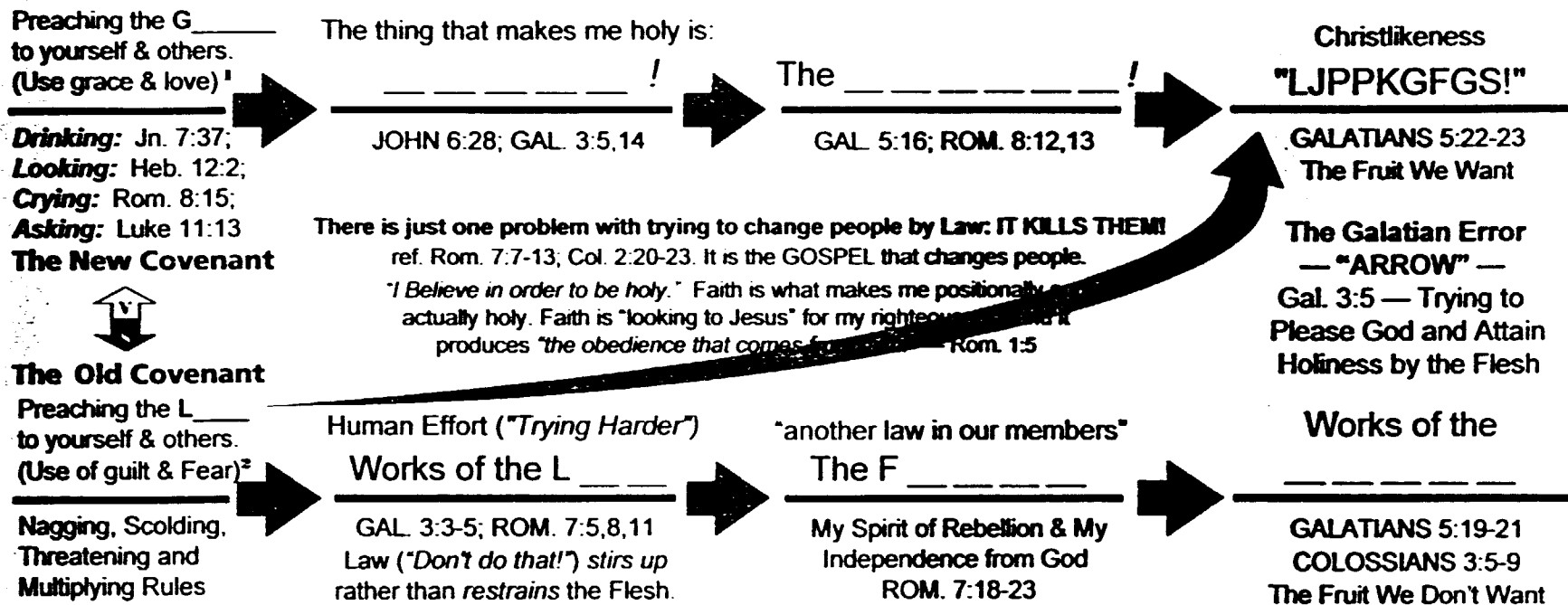
SUMMING UP: Faith sanctifies because: (1) Faith gives us the Spirit, and (2) the fruit of the Spirit is love, and (3) when we have loved, we have "kept the whole law." (Matt. 22:36, Jn. 15:1ff, Gal. 3:1-5, Rom. 13:8-10). Paul calls this "the obedience of faith" (Rom. 1:5) and "faith expressing itself through love." (Gal. 5:6) This brings God great glory!

APPENDIX F

HOW TO BE CHANGED & LEAD OTHERS TO CHANGE

HOW TO BE CHANGED & LEAD OTHERS TO CHANGE!

OUR GOAL: To glorify God as "*Christ is formed in us.*" (Gal. 4:19; Eph. 1:6,12,14) BUT... HOW DOES THIS HAPPEN?



WHAT IS THE ONE THING YOU SHOULD DO MORE OF TO GROW IN HOLINESS?

Solve the Mystery by Answering the Three Questions Below!

1. In Galatians 5:19a and 5:22a, what *two things* are contrasted?
2. In Galatians 3:1-5, what *two methods* of achieving godliness are contrasted? (also 4:9-11.)
3. What do you think Paul meant when he used the phrase "the obedience that comes from faith" in Romans 1:5?

¹ No! We are not to be "soft on sin" but rely on our relationship with God in the Gospel to fight it! ² Using guilt and threats of punishment produces grudging, outward compliance, not the loving heart-obedience God desires

APPENDIX G

THE SUM OF SAVING KNOWLEDGE The Evidences of True Faith †

So much for the laying other grounds of faith, and warrants to believe. Now, for the evidencing of true faith by fruits, these four things are requisite: (1.) That the believer be soundly convinced, in his judgment, of his obligation to keep the whole moral law, all the days of his life; and that not the less, but so much the more, as he is delivered by Christ from the covenant of works, and curse of the law. (2.) That he endeavor to grow in the exercise and daily practice of godliness and righteousness. (3.) *That the course of his new obedience run in the right channel, that is through faith in Christ, and through a good conscience, to all the duties of love towards God and man.* (4.) *That he keep strait communion with the fountain Christ Jesus, from whom grace must run along, for furnishing of good fruits.* . . . (1973, 339, italics mine).

[Following are the fuller explanations of points (3.) and (4.) above, from pages 341–343.]

III. The third thing requisite to evidence true faith is, that obedience to the law run in the right channel, that is, through faith in Christ, etc. holden forth, I Tim 1:5.

"Now, the end of the commandment is love, out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned."

Wherein the apostle teacheth these seven doctrines:

1. That the obedience of the law must flow from love, and love from a pure heart, and a pure heart from a good conscience, and a good conscience from faith unfeigned: this he makes the only right channel of good works: "The end of the law is love," etc.

2. That the end of the law is not, that men may be justified by their obedience of it, as the Jewish doctors did falsely teach; for it is impossible that sinners can be justified by the law, who, for every transgression, are condemned by the law: "For the end of the law is (not such as the Jewish doctors taught, but) love, out of a pure heart," etc.

3. That the true end of the law, preached unto the people, is, that they, by the law, being made to see their deserved condemnation, should flee to Christ unfeignedly, to be justified by faith in him; so saith the text, while it maketh love to flow through faith in Christ.

† Excerpted from: *Westminster Confession of Faith; the Larger and Shorter Catechisms*; with the Scripture proofs at large; together with *The Sum of Saving Knowledge*. Free Presbyterian Publications. Head Office and Book Room. 160 Pitt Street. Glasgow C.2 1973 (pp. 341-343)

4. That no man can set himself in love to obey the law, excepting as far as his conscience is quieted by faith, or is seeking to be quieted in Christ; for "the end of the law is love, out of a good conscience, and faith "feigned."

5. That feigned faith goeth to Christ without reckoning with the law, and so wants an errand; but unfeigned faith reckoneth with the law, and is forced to flee for refuge unto Christ, as the end of the law for righteousness, so often as it finds itself guilty for breaking of the law: "For the end of the law is faith unfeigned."

6. That the fruits of love may come forth in act particularly, it is necessary that the heart be brought to the hatred of all sin and uncleanness, and to a steadfast purpose to follow all holiness universally: "For the end of the law is love, out of a pure heart."

7. That unfeigned faith is able to make the conscience good, and the heart pure, and the man lovingly obedient to the law; for when Christ's blood is seen by faith to quiet justice, then the conscience becometh quiet also, and will not suffer the heart to entertain the love of sin, but sets the man on work to fear God for his mercy, and to obey all his commandments, out of love to God, for his free gift of justification, by grace bestowed on him: "For this is the end of the law indeed," whereby it obtaineth of a man more obedience than any other way.

IV. The fourth thing requisite to evidence true faith is, the keeping strait communion with Christ, the fountain of all graces, and of all good works; holden forth, John xv.5.

"I am the vine, ye are the branches: he that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit; for without me ye can do nothing."

Wherein Christ, in a similitude from a vine-tree, teacheth us,

1. That by nature we are wild barren briers, till we be changed by coming unto Christ; and that Christ is that noble vine-tree, having all life and sap of grace in himself, and able to change the nature of every one that cometh to him, and to communicate spirit and life to as many as shall believe in him: "I am the vine, (saith he,) and ye are the branches."

2. That Christ loveth to have believers so united unto him, as that they be not separated by any time by unbelief; and that there may be a mutual inhabitation of them in him, by faith and love; and of him in them, by his word and Spirit; for he joineth these together, "If ye abide in me, and I in you," as things inseparable.

3. That except a man be ingrafted into Christ, and united to him by faith, he cannot do any the least good works of his own strength; yea, except in as far as a man doth draw spirit and life from Christ by faith, the work which he doth is naughty and null in point of goodness in God's estimation: "For without me (saith he) ye can do nothing."

4. That this mutual inhabitation is the fountain and infallible cause of constant continuing and abounding in well-doing: For "he that abideth in me, and I in him, (saith he,) the same beareth much fruit." Now, as our abiding in Christ presupposeth three things, 1st, That we have heard the joyful sound of the gospel, making offer of Christ to us, who

are lost sinners by the law; 2d, That we have heartily embraced the gracious offer of Christ; 3d, That by receiving of him we are become the sons of God, John 1:12, and are incorporated into his mystical body, that he may dwell in us, as his temple, and we dwell in him, as in the residence of righteousness and life: so our abiding in Christ importeth other three things, (1.) An employing of Christ in all our addresses to God, and in all our undertakings of whatsoever piece of service to him. (2.) A contentedness with his sufficiency, without going out from him to seek righteousness, or life, or furniture in any case, in our own or any of the creature's worthiness. (3.) A fixedness in our believing in him, a fixedness in our employing and making use of him, and a fixedness in our contentment in him, and adhering to him, so that no allurement, no temptation of Satan or the world, no terror nor trouble, may be able to drive our spirits from firm adherence to him, or from the constant avowing of his truth, and obeying his commands, who hath loved us, and given himself for us; and in whom not only our life is laid up, but also the fullness of the Godhead dwelleth bodily, by reason of the substantial and personal union of the divine and human nature in him.

Hence let every watchful believer, for strengthening himself in faith and obedience, reason after this manner:

"Whosoever doth daily employ Christ Jesus for cleansing his conscience and affections from the guiltiness and filthiness of sins against the law, and for enabling him to obedience to the law in love, he hath the evidence of true faith in himself:

But I (may every watchful believer say) do daily employ Jesus Christ for cleansing my conscience and affections from the guiltiness and filthiness of sins against the law, and for enabling of me to give obedience to the law in love:

Therefore I have the evidence of true faith in myself."

And hence also let the sleepy and sluggish believer reason, for his won upstirring, thus:

"Whatsoever is necessary for giving evidence of true faith, I study to do, except I would deceive myself and perish: but to employ Christ Jesus daily for cleansing of my conscience and affections from the guiltiness and filthiness of sins against the law, and for enabling me to give obedience to the law in love, is necessary for evidencing of true faith in me:

Therefore this I must study to do, except I would deceive myself and perish."

And, *lastly*, Seeing Christ himself hath pointed this forth, as an undoubted evidence of a man elected of God unto life, and given to Jesus Christ to be redeemed, "if he come unto him," that is, close covenant, and keep communion with him, as he teacheth us, John vi.37. saying,

"All that the Father hath given me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out;" let every person, who doth not in earnest make use of Christ for remission of sin, and amendment of life, reason hence, and from the whole premises, after this manner, that his conscience may be awakened:

"Whosoever is neither by the law, nor by the gospel, so convinced of sin, righteousness, and judgment, as to make him come to Christ, and employ him daily for remission of sin, and amendment of life; he wanteth [lacks] not only all evidence of saving faith, but also all appearance of his election, so long as he remaineth in this condition:

But I (may every impenitent person say) am neither by the law nor gospel so convinced of sin, righteousness, and judgment, as to make me come to Christ, and employ him daily for remission of sin, and amendment of life:

Therefore I want (lack) not only all evidence of saving faith, but also all appearance of my election, so long as I remain in this condition" (*Confession* 1973, 323–342).



APPENDIX II
ORPHANS VS. SONS
LIST

ORPHANS vs. SONS LIST

Spiritual Orphans Are Not "Consciously Clothed" In Christ's Righteousness

This is a diagnostic tool to show the movement of a growing Christian's life—not a list of attributes we will acquire fully in this life. We will "move right," however, as we surrender to the gift-righteousness of Jesus and keep repenting of our inclination to live for the praise of men rather than the glory of God.

THE ORPHAN

SANCTIFICATION

THE SON or DAUGHTER

SANCTIFICATION BY "TRYING HARDER"

"Are you so foolish? After beginning with the Spirit, are you now trying to attain your goal by human effort?" — Gal. 3:3

He feels alone and lacks a vital daily intimacy with God. He is "a vacuum of self concern."

He is full of anxiety over felt needs—friends, money, etc. "I'm all alone and nobody cares." You would not describe him as "full of joy."

He lives on a success/fail basis and must look good at any cost (performance oriented).

He feels condemned, guilty and unworthy before God and others.

He has a little faith, lots of fear, and no ability to really trust God. "I must fix it."

He says "yes" to everything, fears saying "no," tries to please everybody, but then burns out.

He is rebellious towards God and others, and acts spiritually cold and hard hearted.

He gets angry and defensive at the suggestion that he might be self-righteous—instead of examining himself. He lacks integrity.

He must always be right, play it safe, and can't fail. He can't tolerate criticism—only praise. He lives for the praise of men. (Jn. 12:43)

He is SELF-confident but DIS-couraged. Relying on self, he lacks the power of the Spirit.

"I'll show them!" "Just watch me!" "Where they have failed, I will succeed." (will power)

What drives his ministry is "self effort" and reliance on his natural talents and abilities.

He is complaining and thankless toward God and others. He tears others down and displays a bitter, critical spirit.

He is an expert at pointing out what is wrong. He is always complaining and dissatisfied about something—often wearing a "I smell a dead fish somewhere-look" on his face.

SANCTIFICATION BY FAITH

John 14:18 "I will not leave you as orphans..."

Οὐκ ἀφήσω ὑμᾶς ὀρφανούς. ἔρχομαι πρὸς ὑμᾶς.

1 He has this growing assurance: "God really is *is my loving Heavenly Father!*" (1 Jn. 4:18)

2 He trusts his Father and has a growing confidence in his loving care. He is more and more free from worry. (Matt. 6:25ff)

3 He is learning to live in *daily self-conscious partnership* with God as his "Senior Partner."

4 He *feels* loved, forgiven, and totally accepted because he is *consciously* "clothed in Christ."

5 He has a childlike trust that God's sovereign plan for his life is loving, wise and good.

6 Prayer is his first resort: "Can you wait, please? I must ask my Father first." (Jn. 14:13, 15:16)

7 He has the strength to be submissive and a tender heart toward God. (Psalm 51:17)

8 He is open to criticism since he stands *consciously* in Christ's perfection—not his own. He examines his deeper motives. (Ps. 139:23,24)

9 Since his righteousness is in Christ, he needs no "record" to boast in. He can take risks—even fail. He lives for the glory of God. (1 Cor. 10:31)

10 He is CHRIST-confident and EN-couraged because he sees the Holy Spirit working in him.

11 Phil. 4:13 ("I can do all things through Christ who gives me strength!") is not just a memory verse.

12 He is trusting in himself less, and consciously relying on the Holy Spirit more.

13 He relies on the Spirit to guide his tongue for use in praise, edification, thanksgiving, and building others up—not tearing them down.

14 He is not blind to wrong, but *chooses* to focus on what is "good and lovely." - Phil. 4:8 (Chronically negative people may try to dampen your positivism by becoming even more negative.

He gossips (confesses other people's sins) He criticizes others to hide his own faults. He has a critical spirit, but claims that he has "the gift of discernment" (Prov. 17:9)

He compares himself to others—leading either to pride or depression (depending on how good or bad he looks compared to them)

He has no victory over his pet sins. He is defeated by sin, but increasingly less sensitive to it. He has lost the sense of being a "Big Sinner."

He is relatively prayerless. Prayer is a last resort. When all else fails, he prays. He prays often in public, but rarely in private.

God's promises of spiritual power and joy mock him. *"What happened to all your joy?"* (Gal. 4:15)

He needs to boast. He is constantly pointing to his accomplishments for fear that people might not notice them. (Gal. 6:14)

He is (maybe unconsciously) "building a record" he then defends. He wants to be admired.

He is self-centered and controlling. *"They will see things my way."* He has a deep need to be in control of people and situations.

Something other than Jesus can satisfy him. His position and possessions make him feel worthy, significant, justified. (Not, *"I count them as dung so that I may win Christ."* Phil. 3:8)

He has little desire to share his faith, and if he does, it is out of duty—not love for the lost person. *"May God fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit."* Rom. 15:13

15 He is able to freely confess his faults to others, but does his best to minimize theirs. He doesn't always have to be right. He is a learner, and realizes that he is often wrong.

16 His hope is built on nothing less than Jesus' righteousness. He leans on Jesus' name—not on his own goodness. (Phil. 3:9)

17 He is having more and more victory over the sins of the flesh—yet has a growing consciousness of his sinfulness. (2 Tim. 1:15; Rom. 8:10)

18 Prayer is a vital part of the day, and is not confined to a "Quiet Time." He talks to his Abba throughout the day. (1 Thess. 5:16-18)

19 God's promises of spiritual power and joy are beginning to describe him. (Rom. 15:13)

20 He finds that Jesus is more and more the subject of his conversation. He boasts in his weaknesses. (2 Cor. 12:9-10)

21 Christ's righteousness is his record, so he stands complete in Him. (1 Cor. 1:28ff)

22 He is becoming Christ-controlled and is learning to "crucify" his urge to control others and build his own kingdom for his own glory. (Gal. 5:24)

23 Knowing Christ truly satisfies his soul. *"...and having Him, I desire nothing else on earth" (Ps. 73:25) "May I never boast except in the cross of Christ Jesus my Lord."* (Gal. 6:14)

24 He shares the Gospel freely because he wants people to know God the way he knows him. He witnesses even when there is no evangelism program pressuring him into it. *"For the love of Christ constrains us..."* (2 Cor. 5:14)

Have you noticed that your movement from the left to the right side of these pages tends to alternate between a run and a crawl—or worse, a retreat back toward the left? I have the same problem. Take heart; we are in good company with the apostle Paul. (Rom. 7:15-24) We have all met people who claim to have found "The Secret of Perfection." Listen. Try living with them for 2 weeks and you will see that they are far from perfect. Beware of their teaching. Disillusionment stalks them and all who follow them. So, how can we move from living like orphans to sons? *By daily believing the Gospel.* There are no seven easy steps to holiness—no secret formulas. The Gospel is all we need. And, what is the Gospel? *"Jesus died for sinners!"* If you have truly trusted Christ as your sin-bearer, then hear this:

The Father loves you (1 Jn. 3:1); the Son died for you and was raised to life for you. And, what's more, *this very moment*, Jesus is seated at the right hand of his Father presenting his righteousness to the Father for you (interceding). The result of this is that in the Father's eyes, sinful you (and sinful me) are *beautiful*! (Rom. 8:34; Heb. 7:24f) God sees us as those who are "clothed" in the righteousness of another—that of his own Son (Gal. 3:27). *Stay with me; this gets even better.* The Holy Spirit is in your heart right now crying "Abba-Father!" so that you will reply with the same cry. (Gal. 4:6; Rom. 8:15) Cry!!! Fix your eyes on Jesus and keep them there. (Heb. 12:1) It is our trust in *Christ's righteousness* that changes us—not our trying harder. In Gal. 3:5, 5:15ff and Col. 2:6, Paul tells us we are to continue in Christ the same way we started—by faith and the Spirit! *"Rivers of living water"* are promised to thirsty ones who *"keep coming to and keep drinking"* of Jesus. (Jn. 7:37ff) So, if we want to be "strong in the Lord," we must become weak—dependent on the Spirit. (2 Cor. 12:9,10) To mature—become like a child (Lk. 18:17) *More books and seminars won't give you life—not even SONSHIP—but, Jesus can.* So, *believe the Gospel!* —JWL—

APPENDIX I

THE JERUSALEM COUNCIL. The Text of Acts 15:1-35 (NIV)

The Council at Jerusalem

Some men came down from Judea to Antioch [Syria] and were teaching the brothers

"Unless you are circumcised, according to the custom taught by Moses, you cannot be saved." This brought Paul and Barnabas into sharp dispute and debate with them. So Paul and Barnabas were appointed, along with some other believers, to go up ["up" in altitude, south by compass] but "to Jerusalem to see the apostles and elders about this question. ³ The church sent them on their way, and as they traveled through Phoenicia and Samaria, they told how the Gentiles had been converted. This news made all the brothers very glad. ⁴ When they came to Jerusalem, they were welcomed by the church and the apostles and elders, to whom they reported everything God had done through them.

⁵ Then some of the believers who belonged to the party of the Pharisees stood up and said, "*The Gentiles must be circumcised and required to obey the law of Moses.*"

⁶ The apostles and elders met to consider this question. ⁷ After much discussion, Peter got up and addressed them: "*Brothers, you know that some time ago God made a choice among you that the Gentiles might hear from my lips the message of the gospel and believe. ⁸ God, who knows the heart, showed that he accepted them by giving the Holy Spirit to them, just as he did to us. ⁹ He made no distinction between us and them, for he purified their hearts by faith. ¹⁰ Now then, why do you try to test God by putting on the necks of the disciples a yoke that neither we nor our fathers have been able to bear? ¹¹ No! We believe it is through the grace of our Lord Jesus that we are saved, just as they are.*"

¹² The whole assembly became silent as they listened to Barnabas and Paul telling about the miraculous signs and wonders God had done among the Gentiles through them. ¹³ When they finished, James spoke up: "*Brothers, listen to me. ¹⁴ Simon has described to us how God at first showed his concern by taking from the Gentiles a people for himself. ¹⁵ The words of the prophets are in agreement with this, as it is written*

*¹⁶ "After this I will return
and rebuild David's fallen tent.
Its ruins I will rebuild,
and I will restore it,
¹⁷ that the remnant of men may seek the Lord,
and all the Gentiles who bear my name,
says the Lord, who does these things'
¹⁸ that have been known for ages.*

¹⁹ "It is my judgment, therefore, that we should not make it difficult for the Gentiles who are turning to God. ²⁰ Instead we should write to them, telling them to abstain from food polluted by idols, from sexual immorality, from the meat of strangled animals and from blood. ²¹ For Moses has been preached in every city from the earliest times and is read in the synagogues on every Sabbath."

The Council's Letter to Gentile Believers

²² Then the apostles and elders, with the whole church, decided to choose some of their own men and send them to Antioch [Syria] with Paul and Barnabas. They chose Judas (called Barsabbas) and Silas, two men who were leaders among the brothers. ²³ With them they sent the following letter:

The apostles and elders, your brothers,

To the Gentile believers in Antioch, Syria and Cilicia:

Greetings.

²⁴ We have heard that some went out from us without our authorization and disturbed you, troubling your minds by what they said. ²⁵ So we all agreed to choose some men and send them to you with our dear friends Barnabas and Paul — ²⁶ men who have risked their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. ²⁷ Therefore we are sending Judas and Silas to confirm by word of mouth what we are writing. ²⁸ It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us not to burden you with anything beyond the following requirements: ²⁹ You are to abstain from food sacrificed to idols, from blood, from the meat of strangled animals and from sexual immorality. You will do well to avoid these things.

Farewell

³⁰ The men were sent off and went down to Antioch, where they gathered the church together and delivered the letter. ³¹ The people read it and were glad for its encouraging message. ³² Judas and Silas, who themselves were prophets, said much to encourage and strengthen the brothers. ³³ After spending some time there, they were sent off by the brothers with the blessing of peace to return to those who had sent them. ³⁴ But Paul and Barnabas remained in Antioch, where they and many others taught and preached the word of the Lord (Acts 15:1–35 NIV, emphasis and comment mine).

NOTE: The clearest and most concise explanation we have read concerning the events which precipitated the Jerusalem Council is to be found in the commentary by F. F. Bruce, *The Book of Acts*, in *The New International Commentary on the New Testament* series, p. 297 (the last page of Chapters XIV), and Chapter XV, pp. 298–304.

APPENDIX J

Dr. Francis Schaeffer vs. Bishop J. C. Ryle on Sanctification

It's a question of means—not, "Should we be holy?," but "How? "

Bishop Ryle wrote about the need for obedience

Let us . . . beware of despising the law of the Ten Commandments. Let us not suppose for a moment that it is set aside by the Gospel, or that Christians have nothing to do with it. The coming of Christ did not alter the position of the Ten Commandments one hair's breadth. If anything, it exalted and raised their authority. (Rom. iii.31) . . . Let us beware of supposing that the Gospel has lowered the standard of personal holiness, and that *the Christian is not intended to be as strict and particular about his daily life as the Jew*. . . . The more light we have, the more we ought to love God. . . . May we never forget our obligations! The Christian who is content with a low standard of personal holiness has got much to learn (Ryle n.d., *Thoughts*, 1:88, 89, emphasis mine).

We hear the same strident tone in this exhortation from his 1879 volume, *Holiness*:

Genuine sanctification will show itself in habitual respect for God's law, *and habitual effort to live in obedience to it as a rule of life*. There is no greater mistake than to suppose that a Christian has nothing to do with the law and the Ten Commandments, because he cannot be justified by keeping them (Ryle n.d., *Holiness*, 27, emphasis mine).

Schaeffer vs. Ryle

Ryle's mandate that we make a "*habitual effort to live in obedience to it [the law] as a rule of life*" is not wholly wrong, but it is terribly incomplete and therefore dangerously misleading on two counts: [1] "Habitual effort" points to human effort, to moral willpower—not helplessly dependent faith in Christ and reliance on the Holy Spirit. [2] Human effort to keep the law is legalism. New Testament sanctification involves faith in Christ which the Holy Spirit blesses with his fruit—the chief of which is love, the fulfillment of the law (Gal. 3: 1-5). Human effort to obey the law for sanctification was at the heart of the Galatian heresy.

In *True Spirituality*, Schaeffer speaks to the notion of "trying harder." He asks why the "what could be" and "what is" of our Christian lives have differed so tragically, and why we have so often "brought forth the fruit of the Lord's enemy, the devil, instead of the fruit of our lover, our Lord" (1971, 83). Reading Schaeffer and Ryle affords us a fascinating look at two contrasting paradigms of the Christian life. Ryle relies on constantly admonishing his readers to make a "habitual effort" to live in obedience to the law "as a rule of life"—a Mosaic model. Schaeffer calls us into conscious union with Christ—a Pauline model which will yield a life of joyful, loving obedience—not mere external compliance to "the rules."

Schaeffer writes:

There two main reasons why we may not be bringing forth the fruit we should. 1.) It may be because of ignorance because we may never have been taught the meaning of the work of Christ for our present lives. There are five possible "ignorances" in this area. First, the Christian may have been taught how to be justified but never taught the present meaning of the work of Christ for him. Second, he may have been taught to become a Christian through the instrumentality of faith, but then he may have been left, as though from that point on the Christian life has to be lived in his own strength. Third, he may have been taught the opposite. That is, that having accepted Christ, in some antinomian (anti-law) way it does not now matter how he lives. Fourth, he may have been taught some kind of second blessing, which would make him perfect in this life when he receives it. This the Bible does not teach. And therefore he just waits hopelessly, or tries to act upon that which is not. Fifth, he may never have been taught that there is a reality of faith to be acted on consciously after justification. This last point is the point of ignorance of many who stand in the orthodox and historic stream of the Reformation.

Here, Schaeffer has put his finger on one of the residual "toxins" in the stream of Reformation theology in which we modern Evangelicals swim: We have felled whole forests to produce books that are filled with words about the necessity of sanctification, words of infinite precision which define the linkage between justification and sanctification, and words about the Holy Spirit as the divine agent of sanctification, but it is the rare book which goes beyond the "oughts" and "shoulds" to treat the Biblical *means* of obedience: *faith*. Thus far we have demonstrated that even in the Reformed tradition (in which the author stands), we have for the most part either been woefully ignorant, terribly neglectful, hopelessly vague, or just plain in error as we have dealt with sanctification's means. Schaeffer goes on to point out that ignorance about the means of sanctification will exact an awful toll on us, in that the Christian may not "possess his possessions" in this present life." (1971, 84) In using the word "possessions," he refers to the fruit of the Spirit supernaturally produced, i.e., real growth in holiness. Next, he explains the how we must not only understand, but act on the fact that faith in Christ sanctifies. Adding his own personal testimony, he notes that believers who discover this for the first time may have a sense of a "second conversion" (a remarkable description of our renewal in 1990).

But when a man does learn the meaning of the work of Christ in the present life, a new door is open to him. And this new door then seems to be so wonderful that often it gives the Christian, as he begins to act upon that knowledge of faith, the sense of something that is as new as was his conversion. And it has been true for many of us that at a certain point, after we have been Christians for a long time, suddenly through the teaching of the Bible—directly or through someone teaching us—we have seen the meaning of the work of Christ and the blood of Jesus Christ for our present life, and a new door opens for us. So what is needed is the knowledge of the meaning of the work of Christ in our present life, for our present life, and then for us to act upon it in faith.

Next, Schaeffer notes that if we stop short of making the doctrine of justification daily and consciously ours, we will have no power in our faith for sanctification. He says:

In the last analysis it is never doctrine *alone* that is important. It is always doctrine *appropriated* that counts. We can see this in the case of justification. There are many men, unhappily, who have heard the gospel and know the gospel, but do not take Christ as their Savior. In such a case a man had the knowledge, but it means nothing to him, because he has not taken it. It may be so with us in this matter of our present life. We may know the truth, we may have the knowledge, but it has not been appropriated, and so it will not mean anything to us in practice, and the fruit will not be born. But we do not need to be either ignorant or confused. If we are truly Christians, we know how we were justified when we became Christians. *The practice of sanctification is very much parallel to what we know from justification.* In other words, if I am a Christian at all, I have been justified, and thinking back to my justification, all I have to do is to see the parallelisms between justification and the Christian life.

When I see these, there is no reason either to be ignorant or confused, because there are these very definite parallels. In justification the basis is the finished work of Jesus Christ; in sanctification it is the finished work of Christ. In justification we must see, acknowledge, and act upon the fact that we cannot save ourselves. *In sanctification we must see, acknowledge, and act upon the fact that we cannot live the Christian life in our own strength, or in our own goodness.*

In justification the instrument by which we receive the free gift of God is faith, which believes God as he has given us his promises in the Bible. *In sanctification the instrument by which we receive the free gift of God is faith, which believes God as he has given us his promises in the Bible. It is exactly the same thing.* There is one difference between the practice of justification and sanctification. As justification deals with our guilt, and sanctification deals with the problem of the power of sin in our lives as Christians, justification is once for all, and the Christian life is moment by moment. There is a difference in that one deals with the *guilt* of my sin, and the other deals with the *power* [or authority] of sin in my life.

If we are Christians, we have understood and acted upon the finished work of Christ once for all at our justification, and our guilt is gone forever. *Now let us understand and act upon the practice of that same work moment by moment in our present lives.*

Let me repeat: the only difference in the practice is that in justification it is once for all, and the Christian life is lived moment by moment. The Christian life is acting moment by moment on the same principle, and in the same way, as I acted at the moment of my justification (1971, 84-6).

J. C. Ryle's putting our "habitual effort to obey" in the place of faith, represents all that is wrong with modern Evangelical teaching on holiness. Francis Schaeffer, in discerning the Biblical order--that our union with Christ by faith produces obedience to the law, represents all that is right. It's a question of *means*. --- JWL ---



APPENDIX K
LAW, LEGALISM, AND THE GOSPEL

LAW

The Old Covenant - Mosaic Law

A. THE LAW'S CENTRAL PROMISE

1. Life upon the condition of perfect obedience
"Do this and live!" - Deut. 21:1ff; Lev. 18:4,5; etc.
2. Death for disobedience - Gen. 2:17; Rom. 6:23.

B. THE LAW PROVIDES NO REAL SUBSTITUTE

Sins "go on your Barclay's Card" and debt accumulates until a just payment is made. (Heb. 9:15)
Heb. 10:1-4 "For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sin." So, the same ineffectual sacrifices were offered "year after year!"

C. THE LAW'S EFFECT ON THE CONSCIENCE

1. Slavery to an impossible standard. Gal. 4:31
2. It brings guilt and a curse. Gal. 3:10
3. It "kills" the failing lawkeeper. The Law was given to drive him in despair to Christ! (Gal. 3:24)

D. THE IMPLICATIONS FOR THOSE WHO SEEK RIGHTEOUSNESS BEFORE GOD BY LAW

1. They are under a curse. Gal. 3:10
2. They become self-deceived boasters who point to and trust in their own achievements. e.g. the Pharsees - John 5:41,42-44 and Matt. 23:1ff, "Everything they do is done for men to see."
3. SO, as a result, they may feel GUILTY and condemned since they are trying to live up to an impossible standard—perfect love for God and man. (Matt. 22:37-39; Phil. 2:3, "Esteem others...")
4. OR, they may feel PROUD of themselves and look down on others. They are self-deceived, and believe that they really do keep the law.

LEGALISM

CHRISTIANS "Living Under Law"

A. LEGALISM'S CENTRAL PROMISE

"You can sanctify yourself." This sounds like good news, but, Paul warns that it is "another gospel," a deadly heresy that puts men back under the curse of the law. (Gal. 1:6ff; 2:14,21)

B. LEGALISM LOOKS FOR NO SUBSTITUTE

Christian Legalism gives you Jesus merits at conversion, but thereafter, you must maintain your ongoing acceptance with God (not salvation) by striving for holiness and kingdom works. Your eyes are focused on your own works and righteousness

C. LEGALISM'S EFFECT ON THE CONSCIENCE

You become either proud and self-satisfied, or depressed and anxious—depending on how well you feel you are performing. You are a slave to your feelings and to the opinions of others

D. THE IMPLICATIONS FOR CHRISTIANS WHO RETURN TO THE LAW AS THE BASIS FOR THEIR ONGOING ACCEPTANCE WITH GOD

1. You "fall from grace" (as your operating principle) so "Christ is of no value" to you. Gal 3:1ff, 5:1ff
2. You think and act like an orphan (Jn. 14:18), not a son (Rom. 8:15) i.e. "It's all up to me!"
3. You compare yourself with others and strive to maintain and enhance the fragile illusion of being righteous on your own. Gal 5:14,15
4. Legalists are satisfied with an outward conformity to the Law and fear looking at their hearts. They have a shallow view of sin, and therefore of the love of God and the power of the cross of Christ

✠ THE GOSPEL ✠

Living Under the Grace of God

A. THE GOSPEL'S CENTRAL PROMISE

1. Christ has already done the work! Gal. 3:10-14
— NO CURSE! Gal. 2:20. Justification by FAITH!
2. I have peace with God. Rom. 5:1; Heb. 10:22
3. I have the full rights of a son. Gal. 4:4-6; Rom. 8:15

B. THE GOSPEL PROVIDES MY SUBSTITUTE

2 Cor. 5:21 "God made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us that we might become the righteousness of God in Him!" Gospel: "Satisfaction through propitiation" Isa. 53:6 & 1 Pet. 2:21 "...but the LORD has laid on Him, the iniquity of us all!" Rom. 1:16-17; 3:21; Phil. 3:8,9.

C. THE GOSPEL'S EFFECT ON MY CONSCIENCE

1. My Conscience is Cleansed from Dead Work: Heb. 9:11-14; 10:22! 1 Tim. 1:3-5, 18,19; 3:9.
2. "...The righteous requirements of the law (are) fully met in us who walk after the Spirit..." Rom. 3:1, 8:3f

D. THE IMPLICATIONS OF GRACE FOR MY LIFE

1. I am loved, accepted, righteous! "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness!" (Rom. 10:4) I have no need to boast or live for the praise of men!
2. The Holy Spirit Empowers me to live a life of love as I walk in dependence on Him instead of my own effort. Gal 5:16ff; Eph 5:2; Col. 2:6,7
3. Because I walk in God's ongoing forgiveness, I am enabled to love and forgive others. "...the only thing that counts is faith working through love." Gal 5:6 (HEALED RELATIONSHIPS)
5. Ezekiel 36:26 is fulfilled! God gets great GLORY from my new life! I am no longer a slave, but a son who cries, "Abba-Father!" (Rom. 8:15)

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VOLUME 2

**SONSHIP FOR AFRICA:
DISCIPLING BY GRACE**

PART II.

**SONSHIP FOR AFRICA:
THE DISCIPLESHIP COURSE FOR DISCIPLES**

PART III

A DISCIPLER'S GUIDE FOR SONSHIP FOR AFRICA

SONSHIP



for **AFRICA**®

THE DISCIPLESHIP COURSE FOR DISCIPLES

For you did not receive a spirit of slavery that leads to fear, but you received the Spirit of Sonship, and by him we cry, "ABBA-FATHER!" — Romans 8:15



SONSHIP for AFRICA°



The Discipleship Course for Disciplers

LEARNING TO LIVE & MINISTER BY GRACE

1. The GOAL of this course is to bring glory to God by our growing transformation into the likeness of His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

2. The MEANS of this transformation will be our faith in Christ who forgives all our sins, clothes us in his righteousness, and gives us his Holy Spirit to enable us to abandon the quest for our own glory and live for his alone.

3. The FRUIT of this transformation will be increasing intimacy and integrity in our relationship with God and others, the humility to confess and forsake our sins, an ability to minister to others from selfless motives, and a growing ability to bear fruit in conscious partnership with the Father, through the Son, relying on the power of the Holy Spirit rather than our own strength.

THE VALUE OF SONSHIP TRAINING

"The SONSHIP teaching has been a tremendous blessing to me personally. It has helped me to understand what it means to live by the Gospel everyday. This material is one of the best kept secrets in North America and needs to be widely distributed among Evangelicals."

- Jerry Bridges, former Corporate Vice President of the Navigators, author of *THE PURSUIT OF HOLINESS*, *TRUSTING GOD*, *TRANSFORMING GRACE*, *THE DISCIPLINES OF GRACE*, and other titles.

"No ministry today more effectively communicates the love of Christ to people. God is using it to do a deep work in many lives."

- Dr. Larry Crabb, Christian Psychologist and author of *INSIDE OUT*, *MEN AND WOMEN*, *ENCOURAGEMENT*, *KEY TO CARING*, and *FINDING GOD*.

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SONSHIP®

BOASTING IN OUR WEAKNESS ♦ DYING
WITH CHRIST ♦ LIVING BY THE SPIRIT

BOLD ADVENTURES IN THE GRACE OF GOD

Renewal & Discipleship Training for Church Leaders in the New Africa

Christian!

Do you long for a more loving, personal and intimate relationship with God?
Do you want to grow in your ability to love and forgive the difficult people in your life?
Do you wonder if it is possible for the Spirit to change you more deeply after all these years?
Do you feel like your once joyful labor for God has become a joyless list of endless obligations?
Do you have a need to exalt yourself and call attention to the things you do for Christ?
Do you feel burdened down with guilt or a sense of failure before God and others?
Do you feel anxious over difficult circumstances?

Well, we do! As Christian leaders, it is our struggle with these very things that led us to develop **SONSHIP**—the discipleship course for *disciplers*.

A Brief History of SONSHIP Training

World Harvest Mission (WHM) was founded in Philadelphia, PA in the early 1980s. Soon after beginning works in inner-city Philadelphia and Uganda, we discovered that many of our once "on-fire" missionaries were struggling and falling under the stresses of cross-cultural team ministry. In 1986, our founder, the late Dr. C. John "Jack" Miller, a professor at Westminster Theological Seminary, opened the first SONSHIP course with these words:

"We are here to take the Gospel to the nations. But the question is, 'how can we take the Gospel to the nations unless we are being mastered by the Gospel ourselves?'"

SONSHIP calls us to be mastered by the Gospel. It takes aim at the heart and motive level to lead us to honest self-examination and to strengthen our faith so that we are empowered...

- ▶ endure difficult situations with worshipful joy by relying on the Holy Spirit rather than our own resources
- ▶ be changed from the inside-out to become unusually effective evangelists and disciple makers
- ▶ lead our families and minister alongside people very different from ourselves (and therefore very hard to love), and, in those demanding situations to live lives characterized by ongoing spiritual renewal instead of pride, self-reliance, frustration and conflict.

To our amazement and delight, the Holy Spirit is not only using this course as an instrument of on going renewal in our mission, he is doing the same thing in the lives and families of pastors, teachers, missionaries, and lay-leaders around the world!

Due to the demand by church leaders in many countries, World Harvest founded the IRT (International Renewal Team) with a view to gradually making culture-specific SONSHIP training available around the globe. The course, typically done in sixteen two-hour sessions, has proved useful in preparing new recruits for ministry, encouraging veteran workers, and as a tool for discipling lay-leaders. As the word has spread, other ministries and mission agencies are calling on us to train their new recruits and disciple their experienced staff. It gives us great joy to share from the platform of our childlike need of Jesus, the victories and defeats of our past and present ministries to illustrate the workings of Gospel faith. The purpose of the IRT is to promote spiritual renewal in the body of Christ by teaching in the spirit of Paul who said, ***"Therefore I will all the more gladly boast in my weaknesses so that the power of Christ may rest on me"*** (2 Cor. 12:9). Paul told the Colossians, ***"Just as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him"*** (Col. 2:6).

the sad fact is that our striving towards Christian maturity can lead to a crippling self-reliance that costs us our joy, spiritual vigor, and worst of all, God the glory and honor due to his Name. The fruit of self-reliance grows up from the twisted root of self-love, and manifests itself when we lose sight of the Gospel—if at all our beauty and righteousness are gifts from Christ. With our eyes off Christ, we try to beautify ourselves by the things we do for God. A smug religious professionalism eventually follows, with the result that we are alienated from intimacy with God, our brothers and sisters in Christ—and the lost. The happy fact is that the same Gospel that saved us can restore and renew us through the work of SONSHIP—to lead us into a simple repentant faith that is the foundation and foundation of:

- ▶ a lifestyle of deeper dependence on and intimacy with Jesus
- ▶ relational integrity and joyful fellowship with God and others
- ▶ a deeper dependence on the Holy Spirit and a renewed passion for the glory of God
- ▶ a working trust in God as their loving Abba-Father and “Senior Partner” in ministry

an ongoing renewal of their hearts from which flows a more joyful, free and selfless obedience to God as they are empowered by the Spirit to love God and others in Christlike ways

Are we talking about perfection here? Not on your life—and not in this life! Are we talking about growth in grace? Most definitely. Steve Brown, the founder of *Key Life Ministries*, a nationally syndicated radio and television speaker and the author of *When Being Good Isn't Good Enough* had this to say about SONSHIP Training:

“SONSHIP is one of the most exciting discipleship training courses in America with its emphasis on grace and freedom. This teaching has made a major impact on my life. Its answer to the question of what it means to be a child of God just might be one of the sparks that God uses to start another great awakening!”

“Too Good to Be True?”

Does all of this sound superficial to you—as though we’re denying the struggles and the suffering that is going on in and around us? Shouldn’t all of this talk of love and joy be reserved for heaven? Do you think our statements sound like empty dreams?

Well, we encourage you to be skeptical! But, in the midst of your healthy skepticism, consider these testimonies of a few of the many hundreds of believers who have found that SONSHIP training has helped them rediscover the transforming power of the Gospel of grace.

- ▶ *After four years in the pastorate, my ministry was characterized by powerlessness, emptiness and frustration. Relying on my own strengths and resources, I found them to be inadequate to do the work of Christ. There was little joy or love left in my walk with Jesus or in my ministry. SONSHIP has led me to recapture an ongoing and growing love, joy and peace in Christ that I have not sensed for years, and I see God doing new and exciting things in my ministry.*

— Vic Wolf, Pastor, Valley Reformed PCA, Roanoke, Virginia, USA, '92

- ▶ *The Sonship course has completely changed my perspective on the Christian life! The Good News is not only for salvation, it is God's power for daily life! I have learned to see the difference between living under law, legalism—and the Gospel. I received Christ twenty years ago, but now I am starting to live by faith in Christ clearly. As I see that I am still a big sinner who needs the Gospel all the time in every situation, I can look at the sins of other people through God's love and see them as important to God and to me.*

— Fekadu Mulugeta, Life Ministries (Campus Crusade), Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, '95

- ▶ *After serving the same church for a decade, I was being haunted by a seminary professor's words: “After ten years, your church will look just like you!” Our church was lively and growing, but*

It was a hotbed of conflict and gossip. I wanted to escape the rigors of pastoral ministry by entering a doctoral program. Reluctantly, I agreed to attend SONSHIP Week '90 with my wife. There, God gave me a new sense of his love for me, cleansed me from the grip of sins that had robbed me of joy and power, and set me on the road to new life again. Jesus keeps on using this teaching to renew me, my family and ministry. SONSHIP is the one course you never graduate from!

— Johnny Long, World Harvest Mission, Nairobi, Kenya East Africa, '94

► *The Holy Spirit used SONSHIP training to penetrate my heart. I'm beginning to realize that I have lived most of my Christian life without really understanding how much God loves me. This training really challenges me! It helps me see the common trap we Christians fall into— we know we are saved by grace, but we try to continue the Christian life by keeping the law. It also teaches me to realize that I am a sinner, and helpless, but that I have a big Savior Jesus, and that I need to continue believing the Gospel. It also teaches me how to love people, and to understand the power of confessing my sins to others.*

— Esperandieu L. Pierre, NIST/Campus Crusade Staff, Port au Prince, Haiti '95

► *If you are looking for a typical 'how to get it together' discipleship course, don't take Sonship! This is a life-changing experience with the Living God as He works in your life through His Word and His people.*

— Bill Slack, Pastor, River of Life PCA, Phillipsburg, New Jersey, USA, '93

Who Are These World Harvest People?

World Harvest Mission is an independent mission board with strong ties to the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA). The PCA is a Bible believing, Evangelical and Reformed denomination founded in 1973 with congregations throughout the USA and Canada. Dr. Paul Kolstra, head of the CPA's Mission to the World has made *Sonship* (USA) mandatory for all candidates. Presently the course is enjoying wide acceptance in a large number of Protestant denominations, theological seminaries, mission agencies and para-church groups in throughout the U.K., Europe (East and West), Africa, and the US. As of May 1997, Ethiopian Theological College (ETC) in Addis Ababa has adopted *SONSHIP for Africa* as its curriculum in *Spiritual Formation*, and in July 1998, will use a modified version of the course as the syllabus for *Advanced Evangelism*.

If you ask our spouses and friends, they'll tell you that we are not "the arrived ones" who have had our sin natures eradicated. We are still weak people who often fail to live up to what we know. We have to repent—a lot. But, as our spouses and teammates will testify, "If God can use *SONSHIP* to change them, it can help anybody!" Our passion is to live and minister in conscious daily partnership with Jesus Christ and to lead others to do the same. One of God's greatest blessings to us as *SONSHIP* trainers is that the Holy Spirit keeps renewing our lives as we teach others! If there is any "secret" to the power of this course it is this: broken Christians leading others in brokenness. (Psalm 51:17)

In January 1994, my wife Becky and I (church-planters in Kenya from 1973 to 1977) returned to Nairobi to begin a renewal ministry and develop *SONSHIP* Training for the African context. In late 1995, I began a Doctor of Ministry program at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary in the USA (completed June 1998) with *SONSHIP for Africa* as part of the thesis project. Since then, pastors, seminary and university professors, elders and lay-people from some twenty African nations have taken the training and helped us shape, revise and test it. Pastors and professors (Ethiopian, Nigerian, Ugandan, Ivorian, Congolese, etc.) have been trained to teach the course and translations into Amharic (Ethiopia) and French (in Ivory Coast and Senegal West Africa) were underway as of mid-1997. A Swahili version for Tanzania and rural Kenya is being contemplated.



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Interested?
.....

**For more information about culture-specific SONSHIP Training,
you may E-mail, telephone or FAX:**

IN AFRICA

World Harvest Mission of Kenya
ATTN: Rev. Johnny Long - Team Leader
SONSHIP for Africa Development & Training
P.O. Box 76254 YaYa Centre
Nairobi, Kenya EAST AFRICA
Tel. (011-254-2) 56-04-21
E-mail: jwlong@maf.org

IN NORTH AMERICA

World Harvest Mission
ATTN: Drew Angus, IRT Director
100 West Avenue - Suite 960
Jenkintown, PA 19046 USA
Tel. (215) 885-1811
FAX (215) 885-4762
E-mail: drew@whm.org

SONSHIP USA Cassette Tapes, VHS Video Cassettes and Companion Notebook are available
for the USA and European markets from World Harvest Mission in Jenkintown, PA, USA
through Westminster Media. USA Tel. 1-800-WTS-TAPE

The all-new *SONSHIP for Africa* course is only taught "live" and FREE OF CHARGE except for
a charge of the local currency equivalent of USD \$8.00 to cover the cost of the manual



THE COMPELLING POWER OF LOVE

by Jerry Bridges

PICTURE in your mind a time line of your life—from birth to death. Put on that line only one point—the day you trusted Christ as your Savior. That point divides your life into two segments—you as an unbeliever and you as a believer.

Now think of one word that summarizes the message you needed to hear as an unbeliever. I suggest that word would be *Gospel*. The Gospel that is the power of God for salvation. As unbelievers, the one message we needed to hear and respond to was the Gospel. (Rom. 1:16)

What about the second segment of our lives—as believers? Is there one word that, more than any other, summarizes the message we need to hear as believers? Probably several words might come to mind, but I suspect they could all be captured under the word, *discipleship*. After all, Jesus did commission us to *“go and make disciples of all nations.”*

Under discipleship I would include the spiritual disciplines of the Christian life such as a daily quiet time, Bible study, prayer, attendance at church, fellowship with other believers—every activity that helps us grow spiritually. I would also include worship of God and obedience to Him. Finally, we should include service or ministry—evangelism, discipling others, and using our spiritual gifts in the body of Christ. That’s a plate full, but the one word, *discipleship*, captures them all.

That is the typical way we view the Christian life—the Gospel for the unbeliever, and the challenges of discipleship for the believer. I have come to realize, however, that way of looking at the Christian life is inadequate. It doesn’t produce joyful, whole-hearted believers who know what it means to live by God’s grace every day of their lives. Instead it tends to produce dutiful, but somewhat guilt-laden

disciples, who know they fail to live up to all the challenges of their calling. Or worse, it produces modern day Pharisees who are self-righteous because they are disciplined.

If our typical, “Gospel for the unbeliever and discipleship for the believer” paradigm (pattern) is inadequate, what is the better way? I believe the most important message

we need to hear as believers is *the Gospel*. This doesn’t mean we don’t need challenge and instruction in the various expressions of discipleship. *It means we need to practice discipleship in the atmosphere of the Gospel.*

Someone has said, “Discipline without desire is drudgery.” What is it that puts desire into the discipline of discipleship? What is it that will motivate us to joyously follow Christ? It is the Gospel; the Good News that all our sins are forgiven through the death of Christ, and that His perfect righteousness has been (and is being) imputed to us.

The Apostle Paul teaches us this in 2 Corinthians 5:14-15 when he says that “Christ’s love compels us. . . to live no longer for ourselves but for Him who died for us.” The love of Christ was the compelling motivation for Paul. It forced him to live, not for himself, but for Christ. This should also be our motivation. *It is the Gospel that keeps the love of Christ before us.* To the degree that we live daily in the atmosphere of the Gospel—to that degree will we be compelled by Christ’s love.

If we are going to be motivated by Christ’s love as Paul was, then we must put away the thinking that the Gospel is primarily for unbelievers. We must learn to live everyday in the atmosphere of the Gospel, and in the joy and motivation that brings. Then we will go forth to be even more committed disciples of Him “who loves us and freed us from our sins...” (Rev. 1:5) ✠



Jerry Bridges has been with the Navigators since 1954. He is a Member of the Board of Directors of World Harvest Mission (“the Sonship people”), and author of *The Pursuit of Holiness*, *Transforming Grace*, *Trusting God*, *The Disciplines of Grace* and other titles. This article was published in the Winter 1993 *Harvester*, a quarterly publication of World Harvest Mission, and was edited for SONSHIP for Africa.

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disciples, who know they fail to live up to all the challenges of their calling. Or worse, it produces modern day Pharisees who are self-righteous because they are disciplined.

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PART ONE: THE GOSPEL & SONSHIP

The Journey from Orphanhood to Sonship

&1 - Orphans vs. Sons

&2 - A Daughter Becomes a Son

&3 - A Son Meets With His Father in the Morning

or·phan (ôr'fen) - noun

Definition: A child whose parents are dead.

Etymology: Greek *orphanos* - without parents

In SONSHIP Training, we use the term "orphan" to refer to a Christian who *thinks, talks, acts and feels as if* he has no Father to love him, no Savior to make him righteous, no Holy Spirit to indwell him, and no heaven waiting for him. When Jesus announced to his disciples that he was leaving the earth, they became fearful—like they were about to be orphaned! He reassured them: "I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you" (Jn. 14:18). Then, he told them to wait for the promised Holy Spirit, "the Spirit of Christ" as Paul called him (Rom. 8:9), and "the Spirit of sonship" — "The Spirit testifies with our spirit that we are the children of God. . . ." and "by him, we cry, Abba-Father!" (Rom. 8:15,16).

IF I AM A "SPIRITUAL ORPHAN," how do I think, feel and act? My life (consciously or unconsciously) is centered on controlling my circumstances by my moral will power. I think of "grace" as God's maintaining my own strength—not as his transforming power in me. "Faith" means "trying harder to do and be better" in order to establish a good record so that I can feel worthy. My obedience is related to external, visible duties. I don't examine my attitudes and deeper motivations. My real moral standard is, "What will people think?" I may appear to others as either proud or humble, but in any case, I am learning how to protect myself from hurt in life by developing strategies like building walls, shifting blame, gossiping, and defending myself. For me, survival and looking good are my goals. Living for the glory of God is not high on my list of priorities.

son, son·ship (sun, sun'ship) - nouns

Definition: The fact or relationship of being a son.

In SONSHIP Training, we use the terms "son" and "sonship" in their biblical sense to refer to the new *relationship* we have to God through his grace to us in Christ. As the chosen of God, we are adopted into his family and given the royal title of "son." The term son means that by faith in Christ, we have become God's dearly loved children. As such, we are the "heirs apparent" who will inherit all his spiritual riches in Christ—in this life in part, and in their fullness for all eternity with him. (Gal. 4:4-6; Eph. 1:7, 18; 2:7)

ORPHANS VS. SONS

Passion for The Father's Glory—The Heart of a Son

"I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you..." — John 14:18
"So, you are no longer a slave but a son..." — Galatians 4:7

WELCOME TO SONSHIP! It is our prayer that this will be the most refreshing, life-changing experience in your Christian life since your conversion! Ongoing spiritual renewal involves two things: repentance (seeing our sin), and faith (seeing Christ). Repentance is painful; faith is joyfull! The Holy Spirit blesses repentant faith in Christ with the power to live new lives for God's glory. "No pain, no gain," so, as we begin our adventure, will you make King David's, prayer your own? *"Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me and know my thoughts. See if there is any wicked way in me, and lead me in the everlasting way."* — Ps. 139:23,24

OUR THREEFOLD AIM in this lesson is: (1) To search for God's *chief purpose* in calling us to be his children, (2) to face up to our rebellion against that purpose, and, (3) to give us great joy by discovering that the cure for our spiritual weakness and disobedience is not "trying harder," but entering into the fullness of a relationship which we already have with the Father by faith in Jesus—our sonship (Gal. 4:4-6).

I. A TWO-STEP SEARCH: DISCOVERING GOD'S PURPOSE FOR THE GOSPEL

STEP ONE

BIBLICAL DETECTIVE WORK: Where can we discover God's purpose for the New Covenant? By searching the Old Testament prophets!

Can you answer these questions from Ezekiel 36:22-23.

A. Why did God want to replace the Old Covenant of the Law with the Gospel?

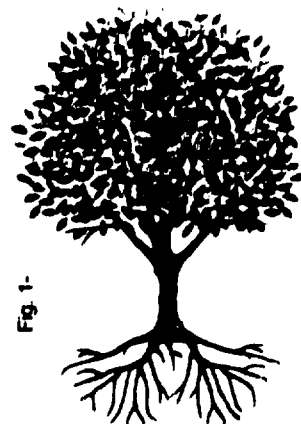
"It is N ____ for your sake O house of Israel that I am about to do these things, but for the sake of my H ____ N ____ which you have profaned among the N ____ S." "I will show the holiness of my great Name... and then the nations will know that ____ am the L ____ declares the Sovereign Lord, when I show myself H ____ through Y ____ before their eyes!" (NIV)

IS GOD SAYING that his chief purpose for us in the Gospel is his glory — not our blessing?

Yes, and Paul echoes this in Ephesians 1, vs. 6, 12 & 14 (p. S1-13) **Question:** Does this mean that God does not really love us—that we are just puppets to be used? Not at all! *He loves us more than we can fathom!* He delights to bless us with new life now and heaven forever! *Still*, his chief purpose for the Gospel is his glory! If seeing this hurts our feelings, it just goes to show how self-centered we are and how much we need to repent and adopt God's purpose as ours!

Predictably then, the glory of God is the chief goal of **SONSHIP** for Africa! We want to help you "get on board" God's program. As you do, and to the extent that you do, incredible joy, spiritual growth, and the ability to love, bless and minister to others will follow!

OUR CHRISTIAN LIFE: A TREE



OUR ACTIONS
The things we DO
(good and bad)
pray, give, share,
worship, witness,
lie, boast,
gossip

OUR EMOTION
What we FEEL
(good and bad)
love, joy, peace,
grief, lust, anger,
envy, hate,
sadness

OUR MOTIVES
Who we ARE: Our Heart of Hearts.
The Source of Our Actions and Feelings.
The Battleground of the Flesh vs. the Spirit ("As a man thinks in his heart, so he is" Prov. 23:7)

B. Why didn't the Old Covenant work? Why did Israel profane (dishonor) God's name? God gave them his moral Law (the Ten Commandments) and the ceremonial law (a system of atonement) to set them apart from the other nations (Ex. 20:3-17). He wanted them to spread the news of his glory to the nations by their loving obedience to him!

1. How did Israel respond to the giving of the Law? — 'Hakuna matata!' (No problem!) 'Sure! We can do this!' 'All that the Lord has said, we will do!' — Ex. 24:3
2. But how well did they obey it? 1 Kings 14:22-24 and Isa. 57:3-6 are just two examples of their shocking and persistent disobedience.

WHAT WAS THEIR PROBLEM? The Law was perfectly clear in its demands. No problem there. The people were eager to keep it. No problem there. Then why was the Old Covenant such a disaster? Actually, there were two problems, one with the law, and the other with the people. (We will see this more clearly in a workshop in S-5.)

① Law can tell us what to do, but it can't empower us to do it. Put another way, the Law can tell us what is wrong with us, but can't fix it. (The Law was 'powerless.' Rom.8:3)

② As for the people, they had the will to keep the law, but not the ability. They had a heart problem. We needed a new covenant because the old one could not make us holy! The people became like the nations around them, and God lost glory!

STEP TWO PREPARE FOR SOME GOOD NEWS! In Ezekiel 36 and Jeremiah 31, God promised a New Covenant, and two new 'pieces of equipment' to ensure that he would get the glory he desires. WHAT IS THIS 'NEW EQUIPMENT'?

CLUE ONE: Ezek. 36:26,27 We will get a H ____ transplant, and God will put his S ____ in our new hearts to enable us to keep his commandments!

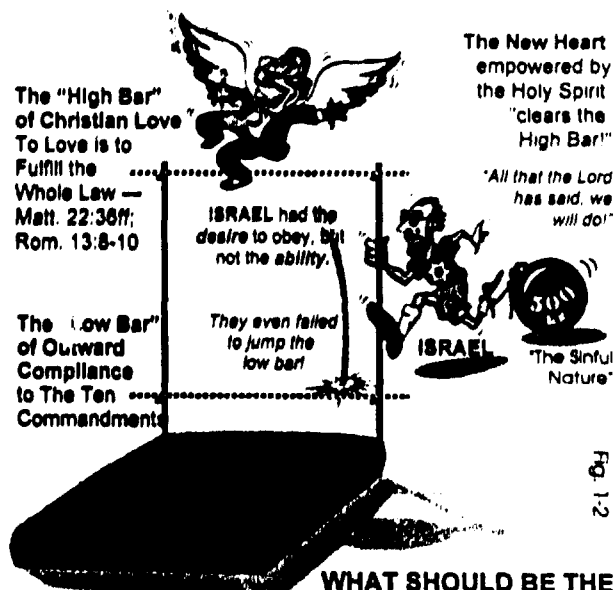
CLUE TWO: Jer. 31:33, 34 'I will put my law in their M ____ and write it on their H ____ They will all know me, from the greatest to the least, for (because) I will forgive their S ____ and remember their wickedness no more.'

NOW WE HAVE the new heart and the new Spirit, and with them the solution to the two great flaws of the "shadow" of the Old Covenant! (Heb. 10:1-18)

① Our 'ability problem' regarding the Law is doubly dealt with! a. Through the death of Christ on the cross, our violations of the Law are forgiven. (Jer. 31:34). And, b. when we are "born again" by God's Spirit, we 'die and are raised with Christ.' Our natures are changed. We are made alive to God and the Law is 'written on our hearts' so that we 'delight in his Law in our inner man.' (Jn. 3:6,7; Rom. 6:2ff; 7:22.)

② Our 'heart problem' is dealt with by the Holy Spirit, "God's Spy" sent to dwell in our hearts. As we walk by faith, he empowers us to keep the Law, and not just externally. His fruit gives us the character of Jesus, so that we begin to love as God loves. (S-4 - Gal. 5:22; Eph. 5:1)

NEW COVENANT "GOSPEL WINGS"



WHAT SHOULD BE THE GRAND THEME AND CHIEF END OF OUR LIVES? WHY DID GOD CHOSE US TO BE HIS CHILDREN?
"Let your light so shine before men that..." — Matt. 5:16

II. NEW HEART FAILURE: ITS CAUSE—COST—AND CURE

One would think that our new heart and the Holy Spirit would make victory *certain!*

Peter assures us that: *"His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires."* — 1 Peter 1:3,4

THE FACT IS, WE ARE NOT DOING AS WELL AS WE COULD—OR SHOULD.

As you think about your home church, your denomination, the church in your country, and look at your own life, ask yourself,

in this age of the New Covenant, when we have 'everything we need for life and godliness, why do we still have major problems obeying God? Why is God's stated purpose (to 'show myself holy through you before the eyes of the nations') not being realized? Why do we bring him so little glory, and even tarnish his image?

A. **ITS CAUSE** **SOLVE THE NEW PUZZLE!** Something is blocking our effectiveness in bringing maximum glory to God. *What could it be?*

1. **THE ROOT SIN: PUT ON YOUR 'THINKING CAP'** and write down what you think is *the root sin* that keeps us from bringing more glory to God through our lives. **HINT:** It is the exact opposite of what Jesus told us to do in Matthew 22:37-39. (p. S1-13)

B _ _ _ LOVE

a. **THERE ARE OTHER SINS** that have been suggested as *"the cardinal sin."* Unbelief, pride and idolatry come to mind. Of course these are all linked, and we do not want to be dogmatic, but in using the term *"self-love"* we are attempting to define sin at its deepest root. We would suggest that unbelief, idolatry and pride are *expressions of the deeper problem of self-love*. Wasn't our mother Eve guilty of unbelief? Yes, but the serpent beguiled her by convincing her that she stood to gain from disobeying God. (Gen. 3) Her love of herself is what drove her, and we are her children. We want *"god-ness,"* to *"be like God,"* We want control of our lives.

b. **SELF-LOVE** is incredibly destructive because when we are in love with ourselves, we can't be in love with God or seek his glory. My late mentor, Dr. Jack Miller used to say, *"Our hearts are very small places; there is room there for only one god at a time."* Then he would add this unforgettable admonition:

"Don't live for the praise of men. It will push the love of God out of your heart."

c. **MAKING THE INVISIBLE (SELF-LOVE) VISIBLE** It is easy enough to see how all our sins flow from the fountain of self-love. And we all agree that yes, self-love is a terrible thing. But if we leave it at that, we are left with only a vague notion of what self-love is. We need for the Holy Spirit to *expose* our self-love—to *"rip off its mask"* and show us how it *"talks and acts."*

2. **PUT YOUR DETECTIVE SKILLS TO WORK TO 'SNIFF OUT' THIS 'FRUIT' SIN.**

To help us see through the many disguises of self-love, we are going to spend some time looking at just one of its particularly devastating fruits.

The sin of **B _ _ _ _ _**.

CLUE A: The Pharisees made this sin into an art form. Prayer, fasting and tithing were three of their most cherished works, but they made it a point to do them as *visibly and as loudly as possible* to show people how holy they were. See Jesus' "Seven Woes" against the Pharisees in Matthew 23. And, in Jn. 5:41ff, Jesus compares his purpose for living—the praise of God, with theirs—the praise of men.

CLUE B: Although Paul warns the Corinthian Christians about this activity, under certain circumstances he does it himself and highly recommends it to others!

Have you spotted the sin yet? It is **boasting**.

What two things did Paul love to boast in? The _____ of Christ (Gal. 6:14) and his own _____. (2 Cor. 2:9) Paul told us that it was permissible for us to boast, but in only in T_____ L _____. (1 Cor. 1:31) Otherwise...

3. WHAT IS BOASTING? SPECIFICALLY, HOW DOES IT LOOK AND SOUND?

a. BOASTING DEFINED:

- 1) In the New Testament: Two Greek words are translated, "boasting," "bragging," or glorying. A third is translated as "puffed up" or proud. All of them imply that we have lost sight of God and his glory and are seeking our own.

a) *καύχησις* - kauchesis [kow'-khay-sis] - boasting or glorying (Rom. 3:27; 1 Cor. 1:29ff; 3:21; Jas. 4:16)

b) *δλαζονεῖα* - alazonela [al-ad-zon-i'-a] - boasting, pride, or empty brag-gart talk. An insolent assurance that trusts in its own power and resources. An empty presumption that trusts in the stability of earthly things. (1 Jn. 2:16)

c) *φυσικῶ* - phusloo [foo-see-o'-o] - to inflate, to be puffed up (1 Cor. 4:6, 18, 19; 13:4 - "Love is not puffed up;" Col. 2:18 (over spiritual experiences) (See the Mombasa "blowfish" on p. 1-5. He is normally a tiny fish, but...)

***Boasting Is Taking For Ourselves
The Glory That Belongs To God!***

2) BOASTING IS . . .

- ◆ a "RED FLAG" that our flesh is hard at work, that we are not resting in the righteousness of Christ to "make us beautiful," that we feel inadequate and need to somehow "inflate ourselves" in the eyes of God or others.
- ◆ a "false gospel"—something we do to make ourselves feel "right" or "righteous"—something other than Jesus. And, when we boast, we are "preaching the Gospel"—the "good news" of ourselves.

- 3) James and John mention boasting. John links it with the love of the world. *"If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For everything in the world—the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does comes not from the Father but from the world...."* (1 John 2:15-17) James warns us about "boasting and bragging" about our plans for everyday things like travel and business. (4:13f)
- 4) But, boasting may not involve speaking at all! It can be the secret pleasure we take in possessing a thing that sets us above others, dwelling on our accomplishments, or mentally comparing ourselves with those of lesser ability, etc.

b. HOW BOASTING LOOKS AND SOUNDS (Notice that boasting causes people to lose sight of the righteousness of Christ because they "manufacture" their own.) John notes that our boasting usually centers around what we 1) **HAVE**, or, 2) **DO**.

1) WHAT WE HAVE (possessions, things, spiritual gifts, or intellectual abilities)

BOASTERS will: wear certain clothes, special jewelry, drive around in a certain make of auto, try to associate with a certain church or school or business, "advertise" the degrees they have earned, the authority they have, etc. They want to "be seen" with these things and esteemed for owning them. They let the things "clothe them"—give them a sense of significance. "Look at me—I AM SOMEBODY!"

NOTE: The things may be perfectly legitimate things! But, if we use them in order to "define" ourselves or gain a psychological advantage over others, it destroys our heart-fellowship with God, and drives a wedge between us and the very people he wants us to love.

2) WHAT WE DO (our accomplishments, worldly or Kingdom ones)

BOASTERS will "share" with others the great blessings God has given them, or the great things God is doing through their ministry, but do it in such a way that they turn the "spotlight of glory" so that it shines on themselves instead of Jesus.

"Praise God! We had 900 in our Sunday School! How many did you have?"

"You know, my family owns property at the coast."

"Yes, well, our church solved that. We bought a bus for three million shillings."

"Oh, I don't agree with (insert a doctrine), I am a (denomination), you know."

"Well, I give so much to the church, I could never afford a holiday in Mombasa."

"Since I was elected a worship leader, I don't go to the cinema."

The list could go on forever, because our thirst for righteousness is unquenchable and our ability to devise ways to promote ourselves (even using God) is limitless! Yes, there are legitimate ways to share—and our hearts know the difference!

c. SUMMING UP: BOASTING IS ALL ABOUT OUR GLORY—NOT GOD'S.

BOASTING shows that we consider ourselves superior (or that we feel inferior) to others.

BOASTING is an evidence that we believe that we have achieved what the Holy Spirit has done in spite of our sin and weakness.

BOASTING is a sign that we are not resting in Jesus' righteousness. We go back to Eden and mimic our first parents by sewing garments of "fig leaves" to hide our deep-seated sense of inferiority.

BOASTING destroys love and intimacy by introduces conflict into relationships with "I have but you don't," and "I can but you can't" comparisons.

BOASTING is contrary to God's stated purpose for the Gospel since it shifts men's eyes away from God, his glory and his achievements, and puts them on ourselves, our glory and our achievements. We steal God's glory from him.

In our heart of hearts, all of us really want to "grow in Christ!" The tragedy is that we are often blind to why our good intentions produce so little fruit. Our boasting sabotages the work of the Holy Spirit. He is ready to fill us and empower us to do mighty things for Christ, but first we must be empty, weak, and eager to do everything we can to assure that the praise goes where it belongs—to God. Boasting is an affront to the Holy Spirit because we take the credit for what God has done.

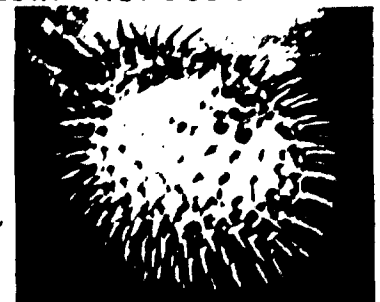


Fig. 1-3

THE "BLOWFISH" — When he feels threatened, he blows himself up with air to impress the enemy. But, he is just a lot of "hot air!"

A CASE STUDY: BOASTING AND ITS BITTER FRUIT IN THE GALATIAN CHURCHES

READ: Galatians 6:11-15 Paul was in conflict with a group of men called "Judaizers" who were requiring Gentile converts to keep Jewish ceremonial laws. ("Judaize" means to "make Jewish") These men traveled 800 km, from Jerusalem to the Roman region of Galatia (present-day Turkey) to force their views on the churches Paul had planted on his first missionary journey—Antioch, Iconium and Lystra. *Can you discern their motives?*

1. On the surface, what was the goal of their teaching?

To have male Gentile converts _____.

We know *why* this was wrong. They were teaching that to be truly righteous—for God to be *really* be happy with you—you had to *add something* to Jesus work on the cross.

What was *not* so obvious was that their passion for the ceremonial law was motivated by something much deeper. Paul exposed their motives for all to see.

2. What were their *real* reasons for forcing these Gentile men to be circumcised?

a. Gal. 6:12b to avoid _____ . (by unconverted Jews)

b. Gal. 6:12a, 13b to be able to _____ !

At last, we arrive at the "bottom line." Boasting. Self-love and pride hide underneath the surface issues and arguments that trouble the church of Jesus. (S-13)

Boasters have always afflicted the church. When Christians have a special spiritual experience or some new idea, they tend to start boasting about it, try to make it *the norm* for everyone else, and start little "clubs" of people who will follow them.

E. FACING UP TO THE BAD NEWS (*"Without overcoming the bees, you cannot get the honey."* — Swahili proverb)

1. It has been easy to analyze the Israelites, the Pharisees and the Judaizers. But the truth is that in every generation—including ours—the greatest bondage believers struggle with is the same—***self-love and its fruit, boasting!*** Those of us who write and teach SONSHIP constantly have to fight the temptation to exalt ourselves. We are full of self-love, and are tempted to boast in how much we think we understand God's grace! **So, we don't stand up to accuse you, but ask that you join us in repentance!**

Are you like us? Do you have your own pet ways of boasting—of seeking the approval of God and others that are not based on the righteousness of Jesus?

2. TWO HARD QUESTIONS: (Are you willing to risk some self-examination?)

Q-1 What are two things you normally boast in? List any things that you depend on, the things that you mentally "wear" to make you feel significant or worthy in your own eyes, the eyes of God or others. (These might be things you own, the way you look or dress, your ethnic identity, your personality traits, or even your spiritual gifts—good things used in a wrong way.

a.

b.

Q-2 Are there things that make you feel inferior to other people—things you try to compensate for (make up for) in some way? This may be painful to think about (it is for us), but growth *begins* with personal honesty.

THE THINGS I FEEL I LACK

THE WAYS I TRY TO COMPENSATE

1.	1.
2.	2.

Most of us have not been aware that when we boast (or feel inferior) that it is a direct challenge to the value of Jesus' Cross. Are you ready for some more interesting news?

"REJOICE! YOU'RE WORSE THAN YOU THINK!"

WHAT? Why rejoice that I'm worse than I think? Because the Gospel *really is* for sinners—big sinners! Sinners like me—and you. Grace, you see, runs only one way—downhill to the needy.

B. ITS COST The Terrible Cost of Our Self-Love and Boasting

FACT: Boasters sound big, but they are weak and lack the power to resist sin in their lives.

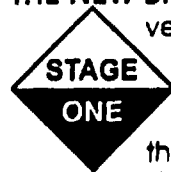
FACT: In every country, there is a long list of Christian preachers, teachers and leaders who have had major moral failures. Can you think of recent examples in your country? Church? Why do you think these failures are so common? Are they sudden and unpredictable, or is there some spiritual process that precedes and gives birth to them?

1. A COMMON FIVE-STAGE PATTERN OF BIRTH, GROWTH, DECLINE AND RENEWAL

Here we are presenting a composite of many Christians' experiences. This is a "worst-case" scenario, but most of us will recognize that we either have lived through, or are presently trapped at some stage in this spiritual nightmare.

NOTICE: Underlying the first four of these "stages" is the popular idea that the Christian life is some sort of a progression in spiritual achievement—a ladder that we must slowly ascend—a ladder of advancement, of earning recognition and receiving ever higher appointments. The Rev. Stanley Voke was asked by a one woman: "Well, I have become a Christian; I have been baptized; I have been made a church member, and now I am a Sunday School teacher. What's next?" (Voke 1964, 5).

THE NEW BIRTH We are born again and have great joy and love for God! We feel like very big sinners, but we are conscious that God loves us and that we have a big Savior whose blood cleanses us from all our sin. We sense relief that our heavy burden of sin and guilt have been lifted. We have a great hunger for the Bible and a love to talk to our Heavenly Father. Neither of these feel like duties to us! We are excited about Jesus, and may think, "Hallelujah! Now I have it all!" (And so we may be told.)



THE SHIFT TO CHRISTIAN BUSYNESS Church membership brings with it a host of things to do! There is worship and Sunday School, Tuesday night Home Bible Study and Wednesday Night Prayer Meeting. We are told that we must be "disciplined" and have evangelism training. The monthly all-night prayer meetings must not be missed. We are given a Scripture Memory Box with 350 verses to learn. We should review our verses three times daily and witness boldly by shouting "PRAISE THE LORD!" each time we greet someone. We must start tithing, purchase an alarm clock so we can rise early for our "Quiet Time", a cassette player to listen to sermon tapes, and an appointment book to make certain we don't



miss any activities. (*Al!!! This "free grace" is getting expensive!*) Yes, these things can be edifying, but there are too many, and the pressure to do them all is oppressive. **BUT THERE IS STILL MORE!** We are given a long list of things to STOP doing. These vary according to your local fellowship and denomination, and may include rules about anything—clothing, jewelry, hair style, theatre attendance, foods you can and cannot eat, and whether or not you can keep dogs (the latter based on Rev. 22:15).

"BUSY BEATRICE"

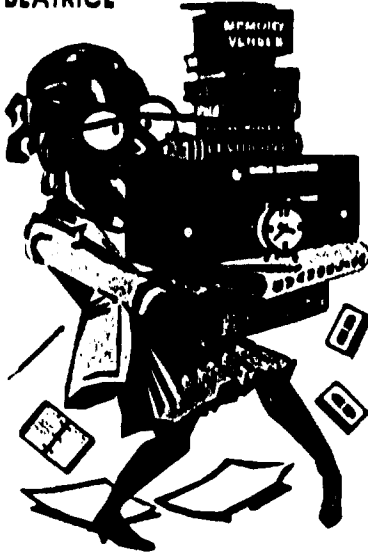


Fig. 1-4

So, we try to start doing the good things, and stop doing the bad things. If we attend all the functions, take all the training, and conform to all the rules, people commend us, nod their approval and tell us we are "growing in holiness." But if we fall at any point, we are made to feel guilty. So, we pay careful attention and work hard. *Praise feels good!*

EVALUATE: What is motivating us at this stage? Who and what are we living for? Why are we in such a hurry to become experts? Where is our "first love," our passion for the glory of God? (Rev. 2:4) Is *Thy Kingdom come!* our heart's cry? Did our initial repentance touch our motives? (The Tree, p. S1-1) We have laid aside the out-ward sins that embarrassed us, but what about our "root sins"—self-love, self-righteousness and self-centeredness? Are they still lurking underground, functioning but unrecognized?

NOTE: Our Christian walk has shifted away from loving Jesus, talking to him, reading his Word, *to duties:* pleasing people, "prayer," and "Bible reading" (same activities—different focus). Our focus is on *serving* God, not *knowing* him.

BECOMING "INSIDERS" People are beginning to take notice of our gifts and give us respect. Not only do we know all the rules, we are experts at keeping them and have achieved the status of "enforcer." (We "encourage" babes in Christ in their growth by keeping the rules. Soon, we may reach the pinnacle—the privilege of *adding* to the rules. We love hearing people tell us that we are "growing in our effectiveness for the Lord," and that we are "showing real leadership potential." This pushes us to work even harder. We are frequently focused on what people think of us, and rarely on what God thinks of us. If we work hard for Jesus and others fail to notice, it hurts our feelings and we sulk or point to what we've done so that our fruit can be properly *credited to our account*. We may not be conscious of it, but are "building a record" of righteousness.

Or, perhaps no one is praising us, so we get depressed. We fear that we will never be able to measure up to those fortunate "up-front," gifted people who somehow are able to keep all the rules, bear all the fruit, earn all the respect, get all the credit and all the glory. GLORY! There's that word again—God's special word.

But, whether proud or depressed, our eyes are not "fixed on Jesus." (Heb. 12:2) Nor are we taking comfort from his ongoing High-Priestly intercession for us. (Heb. 7:25) Instead of clothing ourselves in Christ like *Christians*, we are clothing ourselves in our works like *Pharisees*. (Gal. 3:27)

We have also become deaf to the voice of the Holy Spirit in us. He is continually crying out "Abba-Father!" (Gal. 4:4-6), but our ears are eagerly listening for other voices—those of people praising us. We are not delighting in our Father's care or resting in his acceptance of us for Jesus' sake as we did at first.

Having earned a good reputation, we think about it often, and calculate how effectively each new activity we do might or might not "polish it." ("Polishing" God's name is low on our list of priorities.) At last! Our worth has been recognized! We are elected to some leadership position in the church, or, someone suggests that we should teach a Bible study or Sunday School class, or that we should become an usher or elder or deacon—or even go to Bible school or seminary!

Recognition feels good. In fact, we don't feel like big sinners anymore. We can't see much to repent of! The pure joy we used to have in Jesus has vanished, but we smile and pretend to have it. After all, Christians are supposed to be joyful! ("What has happened to all your joy?" — Gal. 4:15) Besides, people tell us that we are moving up the ladder of spiritual maturity. Surely they are right! This must be the "Victorious Christian Life" we have heard so much about. But, in those rare moments of quiet, when we are alone with our thoughts, we find ourselves longing for something more.

SPIRITUAL FAILURE *This is a highly dangerous stage—dangerous because we are in major spiritual failure, but assume that we have attained success!* Our deep need to "look good" is growing—even at the expense of the reputations of others. We feel better about ourselves if we criticize the work and accomplishments of others. (There is such a thing as healthy evaluation and constructive criticism, but this is not it.) We boast in our good deeds, complain about our poor circumstances (we deserve better), shift the blame for our mistakes, gossip about other sinners, defend our reputations—but do all "the right things" to avoid being criticized for not doing them. In this stage, we rarely (if ever) stop doing anything or start doing anything just because we love Jesus. We are becoming Christian Pharisees—*"Everything they do is done for men to see."* (Matt. 23:5) Spiritual failure can appear in at least two forms: hidden spiritual failure, and public moral failure.

a. HIDDEN SPIRITUAL FAILURE What? Falling spiritually? But we have climbed to the pinnacle of success! Not really. From God's point of view, success is measured by the amount of glory and praise our labors earn for *his* name—not ours. Our chief focus has become how the ministry can help us survive and look good. (Since I did this for twenty-five years and was totally blind to it, I indict myself. Sin blinds us to its presence.)

Having worked hard to earn a reputation, we begin to do more than just take delight in it. We begin to "preach ourselves"—we become "the good news." (Paul said, "We *preach not ourselves, but the Lord Jesus Christ, and ourselves your slaves for Jesus' sake.*" — 2 Cor. 4:5) "Preaching ourselves" shows itself in various ways. 1) We may demand respect or obedience from others ("Don't you know who I am?"). 2) Instead of looking for opportunities to "wash others' feet," we want to be served. We are not content to serve in secret. We want to be noticed, so if we ever do "wash feet," we make sure someone is watching. 3) Too, we spend a lot of energy to protect our ministry from criticism, since what we do—not Jesus—gives us our sense of worth. (In my former days, when people would suggest ways we could improve our church's ministry, I would become irritated and defensive. I felt that my "record" was being attacked.) We are becoming unteachable (we know it all) and unapproachable (too high).

"Pride comes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall." - Prov. 16:18

"The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked..." - Jer. 17:9

The irony is that we are proud we can quote these verses from memory—but blind to the fact that they describe us. Now we are successful and feel we deserve the very best. Our success may open doors for higher pay, so we may do the ministry for material gain. "Money," we tell ourselves, "is a sure sign of God's blessing." We are confident that we are above falling into major sin, but the truth is, we are now set up for catastrophic moral failure of the type that publicly profanes the name of God.

b. PUBLIC MORAL FAILURE Most Christians are shocked to learn that some of their respected lay-leaders, elders, deacons, board members, Sunday School teachers, Bible school professors, pastors, priests, evangelists, conference speakers, television preachers and bishops have all along been embezzlers, adulterers or just general scoundrels. But, it happens all the time! Given the shallow externalism of modern Christianity, why are we surprised? In most instances, the public failures of leaders are the culmination of years of hidden hardness of heart, secret sins of the heart, self-love, and living for the praise of men rather than the glory of God. (Jn. 5:41)

Public moral failure begins in secret with the feeling that we deserve more things and more honor than we are getting. We rationalize that it is permissible to help ourselves to church or school property or funds. (After all, we are not sufficiently appreciated.) The notoriety we have won may give us the opportunity to exploit our leadership position for material gain, abuse of authority (bullying those under us) or sexual pleasure. Or, if we have failed to gain recognition, we may still fail morally, telling ourselves, "What's the use? I will never succeed. I may as well give up and give in."

But, we may avoid public moral failure, and still be terribly unholy. Praise God that many Christians remain pure because they love and walk with Christ. I am convinced that the only reason I did not fall into sexual sin in the past was my pride. I was afraid of ruining my reputation! That is neither God-honoring obedience nor true purity. It is nothing more than self-serving fear. When we don't sin to: 1) avoid feeling guilty, or, 2) escape the physical consequences (like prison or AIDS), or 3) avoid God's judgment, or 4) protect our reputations (which would be ruined if we were caught), that is not obedience. It is acting. And it is all for our glory, our name, and our righteousness—not to lift the name of Jesus higher. True obedience flows from love for God, is energized by the Holy Spirit, as we walk with Jesus in simple childlike faith.

WE MAY BE RECAPTURED BY GRACE! When we have reached "Stage Four"



(above) we need to be "re-evangelized." No, of course we don't need to be "born again" again, but we do need to return to the Gospel as the operating principle of our lives. When the Galatian churches put themselves back under the ceremonial law, Paul told them that Christ had "become of no value" to them (5:2), that they had "fallen away from grace!" (Gal. 5:4) There are frightening parallels between the Galatian heresy and modern Christian legalism. Both threaten the very heart of the Gospel by turning us away from trust in Christ's righteousness towards trust in our own.

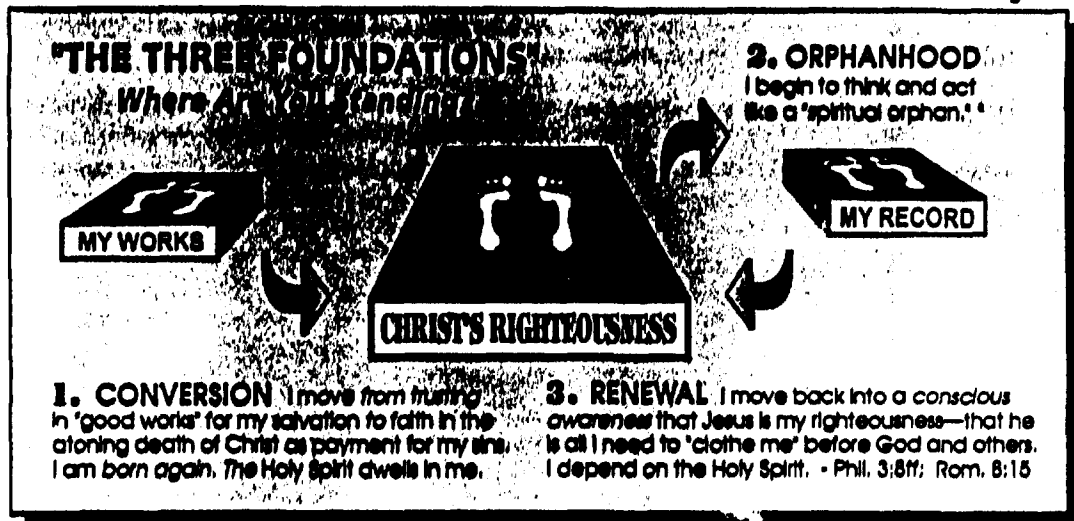
But take heart, there's a way home! And, you are not the first—or the most important—person to be duped! *The Apostle Peter and Barnabas both fell under the "bewitching spell" of Galatianism!* (Gal. 2:11ff) That being the case, why should you be ashamed to admit that you might need to reexamine the current foundations of your faith? Peter was confused. I was confused. Join the club.

Renewal in the Christian life feels very much like being converted again! That should not be surprising, because it is a new repentance and a return to the Gospel.² Jesus told the Laodiceans who thought they looked good that they were "wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked!" (Rev. 3:17,18) The Ephesians got the order to repent, "do the works they did at first," and to "return to their first love." (Rev. 2:4,5) As for me, I will never outgrow my need to run back to the Gospel again and again. My heart (like Peter's) often grows cold and confused.

² Returning to the foundation of Christ in repentance is quite different from the stern warning given by the writer to the Hebrews in 6:1-3. He tells us not to "lay again the foundation of repentance from works that lead to death, and of faith in God, instruction about baptisms, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment." Sonship is not calling you to "lay again" the foundation, but to return to it, stand on it, and build on it! — 1 Cor. 3:10

2. THIS DIAGRAM REDUCES THAT FIVE-STAGE PROCESS INTO THREE SIMPLE STEPS:
 1. conversion, 2. orphanhood, and 3. renewal.

Fig. 1-5



* An 'ORPHAN' is a son who thinks and acts as if he has no loving Heavenly Father, no indwelling Holy Spirit and no interceding Savior. He stands on his 'RECORD'—a mental catalogue of his possessions and accomplishments. This—not Christ's righteousness—gives him his sense of significance (or lack of it). He does not trust in his record for salvation, but for God's ongoing acceptance. It is his focus, so he boasts in it, adds to it, defends it—or, if he feels it doesn't 'measure up,' apologizes for it. (See the 5-1 'ORPHANS vs. SONS LIST'.)

How about you? Is your relationship with God or others based on the righteousness of Christ, or are you standing on your own record? It is an insecure place to stand, I know. For many years I used the ministry to build my own kingdom for my own glory—and was blind to what I was doing! All those labors were just "wood, hay and stubble." When we build for God's glory, we produce "gold, silver and precious stones"—fruit that will endure forever to bring God an abundance of glory! (1 Cor. 3:11-15; Jn. 15:1-11)

Where are you in the "FIVE STAGES?" Remember, the Father knows all about your weaknesses and loves you in spite of them! Believing that will give you the courage to be honest with him and your Christian friends. Without honest relationships, our churches will be places where we feel we must hide from one another. What they should be is healing centers where we are able to freely confess our faults, pray for one another and be healed. (Jas. 5:16)

C. ITS CURE ENTERING INTO OUR "SONSHIP" — The Gospel-cure for self-love, boasting and our thirst for glory

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO 'ENTER INTO OUR SONSHIP?' We would suggest four things.

1. It means admitting our need, repenting and turning to Christ again.

Revelation 3:17-20 You say, 'I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.' But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked. I counsel you to buy from me gold refined in the fire, so you can become rich; and white clothes to wear, so you can cover your shameful nakedness; and salve to put on your eyes, so you can see ... Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me... He who has an ear, let him hear...

In SONSHIP, we challenge one another to live a lifestyle of repentance. Don't be afraid of it, and, don't be afraid to challenge your leader to practice what he or she preaches! They are sinners just like you. We never outgrow our need for Jesus. Thinking otherwise is how we get in such a big mess in the first place.

2. It means surrendering again to God's provision of the *righteousness* of Christ.

To 'surrender to Christ's righteousness' means that we admit to God that we're wrong, that we have been manufacturing and hawking our own righteousness. It means asking his forgiveness, and receiving his gift of righteousness once again.

Isn't it embarrassing to admit that we have not been 'believing the Gospel?' Well, you had better get used to it! If you are like us, you will 'step off the foundation' of Christ often, maybe many times a day. (Our flesh will see to it.) As for us, we see our old patterns of self-love, boasting, and living for the praise of men rise up in us time and time again. So did Paul. (Rom. 7) Don't you? Of course you do! That is why we must learn to 'preach the gospel to ourselves!' And what does that mean? Nothing more or less than listening to the Spirit remind us that in Christ, we are loved, accepted, forgiven and righteous sons of the Father! It means 'fixing our eyes on Jesus.' It means letting Jesus' righteousness satisfy you so that you stop running here and there looking for ways to produce your own. *It means being "clothed in Christ."*

Rom. 13:14 • *'...clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ.*

Gal. 3:27 • *'for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.'*

Paul wrote to a Corinthian church that was torn by division, 'Do not go beyond what is written. Then you will not take pride in one man over against another. For who makes you different from anyone else? What do you have that you did not receive? And if you did receive it, why do you boast as though you did not? You already have all you want! You have already become rich! You have become kings. . . ' • 1 Cor. 4:6-8
Do you see Paul's 'cure' for their boasting addiction? The Gospel.

3. It means being "co-crucified" with Christ. (I die to me.)

Paul • *'I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.'* • Gal. 2:20 (In 1519, Martin Luther commented on this verse: 'The whole of religion consists in personal pronouns... who loved me and gave himself for me.')

George Mueller • *'There came a time when I had to die to George Mueller.'*

C.S. Lewis • *'A man cannot enter the kingdom of Heaven until he has reached the stage of not caring two straws about his own status'* (to Arthur Greeves, 18 Aug. 1930).

Being 'dead' is wonderfull! You are free from the opinions of others, not a slave to them. When you are clothed in Jesus' merits, there is nothing left to merit—nothing to prove. Jesus is your righteous standing before God and men. Do you fear peoples' criticism? They can't kill a 'dead man.'

4. It means crying out 'ABBA-FATHER!'

Romans 8:15 *'For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, 'Abba-Father.'*

We walk with God as our 'Abba-Father' and serve him in love as sons—not in fear as slaves. We are conscious of his presence with us, and so we are able to obey him joyfully as sons—the way his Son Jesus did. Our obedience comes because we are daily believing and resting in his love—not striving to earn it. (1 John 4:16)

It is in the context of this relationship that the Holy Spirit delights to bless us with his fruit and his gifts so that we can love the Father by our obedience, and love others as ourselves.

III. SUMMARY: FIVE WORDS THAT SUM UP THIS LESSON . . .

God's purpose for the Gospel is his (1) _____.

We steal his glory by our root sin of (2) _____.

A major fruit of our self-love is (3) _____.

The Gospel's cure for 'orphanhood' is to enter into the
relationship we have with the Father in Christ, our (4) _____.

To return, we surrender again to Christ's (5) _____.



Fig. 1-6

YOUR RESPONSE? Will you join me in asking the Holy Spirit to show you if you have begun to live for the praise of men rather than the glory of God? The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Truth. He loves the truth, and loves to show you and me the truth about ourselves and the power of the Gospel to change us. Will you pray, *'OH HOLY SPIRIT, SHOW ME MY SIN.'*

Will you put your weak little hand in your Abba's Big Strong Hand? Do you know how much he loves you, how much he wants to lead you, provide for you, and give you the security of living in the center of his sovereign will for your life? Living there is freedom not bondage. It is peace and joy, not fear. And, best of all, it is the place where you will see Ezekiel's prophecy fulfilled in your life as *'the nations know that he is the Lord when he shows himself holy through you before their eyes.'* — Ezekiel 36:23

SCRIPTURES FOR THIS LESSON

Ephesians 1:4-6; 11-14 (NOTE: the glory of God as the purpose in our salvation - vs. 6, 12, 14)
4 For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight, in love 5 he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will— 6 to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves... 11 In him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will, 12 in order that we, who were the first to hope in Christ, might be for the praise of his glory. 13 And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, 14 who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession—to the praise of his glory.

Matthew 22:34-40 34 Hearing that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, the Pharisees got together. 35 One of them, an expert in the law, tested him with this question: 36 "Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?" 37 Jesus replied: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind." 38 This is the first and greatest commandment. 39 And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' 40 All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."

GRACE ASSIGNMENTS:

1. Read the 'Orphans vs. Sons List' (p. 1-15) and work through the accompanying workshop. (p. 1-17)
2. Read: The End of the Struggle by Stanley Voke (p. 1-21ff) and work through the accompanying "End of the Struggle Workshop." (p. 1-27)
3. Photocopy or cut out and use the two copies of the "TONGUE ASSIGNMENT." (p. 1-31)



"SONSHIP is for DAUGHTERS too"

A Special Word to my Sisters in Christ

from Johnny Long

"All of you are sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." - Galatians 3:26-28

I have often wondered if my Christian sisters are bothered by the stark maleness of the language—and it is biblical language—of sonship. When I have asked if it troubles you, you have always replied, "no," and that in spite of the fact that even the title of the SONSHIP for Africa course appears to exclude you. At first I attributed this to mature faith, but later discovered that in many of my sisters it was rooted in a low view of themselves as women. This was painfully obvious in one of my seminary students whom we will call Angela (not her real name). One day in class, the subject of wife beating in Christian families came up. Angela justified the practice with the words, "If they don't beat us, we will not obey." Some days later when she began to grasp the height and depth and tenderness of God's love for her, it melted her heart, and her life was forever changed. "Now my children don't recognize me because I am not screaming at them all day." Angela had been conditioned to think of herself as someone that God saved for purely utilitarian purposes. The love that has begun to flow out of her life is even transforming her husband into a more gentle man! Many Christian women suffer in similar ways and need to discover both the fact of and the emotional response to the love of God for them—what John called "knowing and relying" on the love of God. (1 Jn. 4:16) This article, then, is dedicated to Angela and any of you who share her ambiguity about your worth in the sight of God and in the



Fig. 1-7

***"If they don't beat us,"
Angela said quietly,
"we will not obey."***

sincerity of his tender love for you. What, if anything, are we to make of the obvious "maleness" of the Bible's sonship terminology?

Let's investigate the how and why of the fact that when God sets his saving love on you as a woman, he bestows on you the royal title of "adopted son." Paul wrote to a collection of churches in Roman region of Galatia and said to those men and women, "All of you are sons of God..." Now this is strange language! How can a daughter become a son? We become sons, Paul explains, "through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ." This is good news! Becoming a son in God's kingdom (unlike some other kingdoms) has nothing whatsoever to do with being male. Faith in Christ is what matters—not gender. God does not consider me a son because I happen to be male. Being male has nothing to do with it. I am a son because I have trusted in Christ as my Savior, my sin-bearer. So, you are not disqualified being a son because you are a woman. Your faith in Jesus makes you a son too. Faith, Paul says, "clothes us in Christ." The effect of being clothed in Christ is powerful. Paul says that we become "the righteousness of God in him," and that the "Spirit of sonship," the Holy Spirit, is sent into our hearts to continually remind us that we are sons (2 Cor. 5:21; Gal. 4:4-6). Now we know how God makes daughters into sons.

But now to our second question. Why would God want to turn his daughters into sons? Does God agree with the notion of some that women are inferior? Not at all! God is nothing like the boorish earthly fathers many of us have known. But, if God is not a chauvinist, why does he apply the male term "son" to his daughters? For a very good reason. It has to do with your right to become an heir to his eternal inheritance.

Gerhardus Voss, a renowned professor of Biblical Theology, was fond of saying, *"The Old Covenant is the womb out of which the New Covenant was born."* Indeed it is. The New Testament is unintelligible apart from an understanding of Jewish religion and the culture of the ancient Near East—similar in many ways to the culture of Africa. Animal sacrifice, the ten percent tithe and even circumcision were practiced in many cultures. It was because they were familiar that God chose them as expressions of his covenant relationship to his people. The link between sonship and inheritance is another case in point. In ancient Israel, except in the rarest of instances, sons inherited their father's wealth. Daughters got nothing. Why? It was reasoned that women needed no property since unmarried women would be sheltered by their extended families, and married women would have the full use of their husband's possessions. So, from generation to generation, property was passed from fathers to their sons.

What about here—in Africa? When I ask the women in my classes how many of their fathers own cattle, most raise their hands. But when I follow that question with, *"When your father dies, how many cows or sheep or goats will you get?"* the answer is invariably, *"Not even one; my brothers will get everything."* But what happens in the event that the father has all daughters? Then will they get something? No, his brothers (her uncles) inherit everything! Today in many African tribes—just as it was in Israel—if you aren't a son, you get nothing.

But, the Gospel changes all that! Our faith in Christ confers on us a heavenly sonship which guarantees women full status as heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ! (Rom. 8:17) So, you see, the reason God confers the title of son on you is that he loves you and wants to legally give you a full share in the riches of Christ Jesus. *"If you belong to Christ,"* Paul said, *"then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."* Males who reject Christ are not God's sons and will inherit nothing but his wrath. Women (and men) who have Christ are sons and heirs of everything the Father owns. *"In Christ,"* Paul says, *"there is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female—for you are all one in Christ Jesus."*



Fig. 1-8

Can you see that he loves you dearly and is providing for you generously—as generously as he does for men? Yes, as long as we live in a fallen world there will be injustices and inequities

OO! and some of the members of our human family will be robbed of their rights. But know this: as we believe the Gospel more and more, our hearts will be changed more deeply, and the Spirit will teach us how to love rather than exploit one another. When the Last Trumpet sounds, the women of Africa will not only walk on streets of gold,

they will be given a full share of their Father's cows! Yes, in Jesus, together with all God's riches, *"the cattle on a thousand hills"* are yours. And that is how and why God has made you, my sister, a son. *He really loves you.*

"I will be a Father to you, and you will be my sons and daughters,"
says the Lord Almighty."

— II Cor. 6:18; II Sam. 7:14

Rejoice!

— Johnny —



Note: In a few places in Africa, such as southern Tanzania, there are matrilineal societies—that is, inheritance is under the control of the mothers.

ORPHANS vs. SONS LIST

Spiritual Orphans Are Not "Consciously Clothed" In Christ's Righteousness

This is a diagnostic tool to show the *movement* of a growing Christian's life—not a list of attributes we will acquire fully in this life. We will "move right," however, as we surrender to the gift-righteousness of Jesus and keep repenting of our inclination to live for the praise of men rather than the glory of God.

THE ORPHAN

SANCTIFICATION

THE SON or DAUGHTER

SANCTIFICATION BY "TRYING HARDER"

"Are you so foolish? After beginning with the Spirit, are you now trying to attain your goal by human effort?" — Gal. 3:3

He feels alone and lacks a vital daily intimacy with God. He is "a vacuum of self concern."

He is full of anxiety over felt needs—friends, money, etc. "I'm all alone and nobody cares." You would not describe him as "full of joy."

He lives on a success/fail basis and must look good at any cost (performance oriented).

He feels condemned, guilty and unworthy before God and others.

He has a little faith, lots of fear, and no ability to really trust God. "I must fix it."

He says "yes" to everything, fears saying "no," tries to please everybody, but then burns out.

He is rebellious towards God and others, and acts spiritually cold and hard hearted.

He gets angry and defensive at the suggestion that he might be self-righteous—instead of examining himself. He lacks integrity.

He must always be right, play it safe, and can't fail. He can't tolerate criticism—only praise. He lives for the praise of men. (Jn. 12:43)

He is SELF-confident but DIS-couraged. Relying on self, he lacks the power of the Spirit.

"I'll show them!" "Just watch me!" "Where they have failed, I will succeed." (will power)

What drives his ministry is "self effort" and reliance on his *natural* talents and abilities.

He is complaining and thankless toward God and others. He tears others down and displays a bitter, critical spirit.

He is an expert at pointing out what is wrong. He is always complaining and dissatisfied about *something*—often wears a "I smell a dead fish somewhere-look!" on his face.

SANCTIFICATION BY FAITH

John 14:18 "I will not leave you as orphans..."

Οὐκ ἀφήσω ὑμᾶς ὀρφανούς. ἔρχομαι πρὸς ὑμᾶς.

1 He has this growing assurance: "God really is *is my loving Heavenly Father!*" (1 Jn. 4:16)

2 He trusts his Father and has a growing confidence in his loving care. He is more and more free from worry. (Matt. 6:25ff)

3 He is learning to live in *daily self-conscious partnership* with God as his "Senior Partner."

4 He *feels* loved, forgiven, and totally accepted because he is *consciously* "clothed in Christ."

5 He has a childlike trust that God's sovereign plan for his life is loving, wise and good.

6 Prayer is his *first* resort; "Can you wait, please? I must ask my Father first." (Jn. 14:13; 15:16)

7 He has the strength to be submissive, and a tender heart toward God. (Psalm 51:17)

8 He is open to criticism since he stands *consciously* in Christ's perfection—not his own. He examines his deeper motives. (Ps. 139:23,24)

9 Since his righteousness is in Christ, he needs no "record" to boast in. He can take risks—even fail. He lives for the glory of God. (1 Cor. 10:31)

10 He is CHRIST-confident and EN-couraged because he sees the Holy Spirit working in him.

11 Phil. 4:13 ("I can do all things through Christ who gives me strength!") is not just a memory verse.

12 He is trusting in himself less, and consciously relying on the Holy Spirit more.

13 He relies on the Spirit to guide his tongue for use in praise, edification, thanksgiving, and building others up—not tearing them down.

14 He is not blind to wrong, but *chooses* to focus on what is "good and lovely." - Phil. 4:8 (Chronically negative people may try to dampen your positivity by becoming even more negative.

He gossips. (*confesses other people's sins*) He criticizes others to hide his own faults. He has a critical spirit, but claims that he has *"the gift of discernment."* (Prov. 17:9)

He compares himself to others—leading either to pride or depression (depending on how good or bad he looks compared to them)

He has no victory over his pet sins. He is defeated by sin, but increasingly less sensitive to it. He has lost the sense of being a "Big Sinner"

He is relatively prayerless. Prayer is a last resort. When all else fails, he prays. He prays often in public, but rarely in private.

God's promises of spiritual power and joy mock him. *"What happened to all your joy?"* (Gal. 4:15)

He needs to boast. He is constantly pointing to his accomplishments for fear that people might not notice them. (Gal. 6:14)

He is (maybe unconsciously) "building a record" he then defends. He wants to be admired.

He is self-centered and controlling. *"They will see things my way!"* He has a deep need to be in control of people and situations.

Something other than Jesus can satisfy him. His position and possessions make him feel worthy, significant, justified. (Not, *"I count them as dung so that I may win Christ..."* - Phil. 3:8)

He has little desire to share his faith, and if he does, it is out of duty—not love for the lost person. (*"May God...fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit."* Rom. 15:13)

15 He is able to freely confess his faults to others, but does his best to minimize theirs. He doesn't always have to be right. He is a learner, and realizes that he is often wrong.

16 His hope *"is built on nothing less, than Jesus' blood and righteousness."* He leans on Jesus' name—not on his own goodness. (Phil. 3:9!)

17 He is having more and more victory over the sins of the flesh—yet has a growing consciousness of his sinfulness. (2 Tim. 1:15; Rom. 8:1-9)

18 Prayer is a vital part of the day, and is not confined to a "Quiet Time." He talks to his Abba throughout the day. (1 Thess. 5:16-18)

19 God's promises of spiritual power and joy are beginning to describe him. (Rom. 15:13)

20 He finds that Jesus is more and more the subject of his conversation; he boasts in his *weaknesses!* (2 Cor. 12:9,10)

21 Christ's righteousness is his "record" so he stands complete in Him. (1 Cor. 1:28ff)

22 He is becoming Christ-controlled and is learning to "crucify" his urge to control others and build his own kingdom for his own glory. (Gal. 5:24)

23 Knowing Christ truly satisfies his soul. *"...and having Him, I desire nothing else on earth."* (Ps. 73:25) *"May I never boast except in the cross of Christ Jesus my Lord..."* (Gal. 6:14)

24 He shares the Gospel freely because he wants people to know God the way he knows him. He witnesses even when there is no evangelism program pressuring him into it. *"For the love of Christ constrains us..."* (2 Cor. 5:14)

Have you noticed that your movement from the left to the right side of these pages tends to alternate between a run and a crawl—or worse, a retreat back toward the left? I have the same problem. Take heart; we are in good company with the apostle Paul. (Rom. 7:15-24) We have all met people who claim to have found "The Secret of Perfection." Listen. Try living with them for 2 weeks and you will see that they are far from perfect. Beware of their teaching. Disillusionment stalks them and all who follow them. So, how can we move from living like orphans to sons? *By daily believing the Gospel.* There are no seven easy steps to holiness—no secret formulas. The Gospel is all we need. And, what is the Gospel? *"Jesus died for sinners!"* If you have truly trusted Christ as your sin-bearer, then hear this:

The Father loves you (1 Jn. 3:1); the Son died for you and was raised to life for you. And, what's more, *this very moment*, Jesus is seated at the right hand of his Father presenting his righteousness to the Father for you (interceding). The result of this is that in the Father's eyes, sinful you (and sinful me) are *beautiful!* (Rom. 8:34; Heb. 7:24f) God sees us as those who are "clothed" in the righteousness of another—that of his own Son (Gal. 3:27). *Stay with me; this gets even better.* The Holy Spirit is in your heart right now crying *"Abba-Father!"* so that you will reply with the same cry. (Gal. 4:6; Rom. 8:15) Cry it! Fix your eyes on Jesus and keep them there. (Heb. 12:1) It is our trust in *Christ's righteousness* that changes us—not our trying harder. In Gal. 3:5, 6:15ff and Col. 2:6, Paul tells us we are to continue in Christ the same way we started—by faith and the Spirit! *"Rivers of living water" are promised to thirsty ones who "keep coming to and keep drinking" of Jesus.* (Jn. 7:37ff) So, if we want to be "strong in the Lord," we must become weak—dependent on the Spirit. (2 Cor. 12:9,10). To mature—become like a child (Lk. 18:17). *More books and seminars won't give you Life—not even SONSHIP—but, Jesus can. So... believe the Gospel!* —JWL—

ORPHANS VS. SONS WORKSHOP

"The orphan does not rejoice after a heavy breakfast." — Ewe proverb, Togo

1. List some of the characteristics of an orphan — a "street child" with no home, job, food, etc. How do they feel and act? Where do they hurt? How do they cope with life's challenges?

a.	c.
b.	d.

2. Now, imagine a Christian who has become a "spiritual orphan." (See the S-1 divider page.) He has lost sight of his Heavenly Father and his spiritual riches in Christ. How do you think he will feel, act, and relate to God and to the other people around him? (be specific)

a.	c.
b.	d.

3. Look up John 14:15-18. Jesus is talking about the coming of the: _____ . What specific ministries (or what effects) will he have in our lives?
 - a. Jesus calls him the "C _____ ER" — or "paraclete" (παράκλητον), the one who is "called alongside" us. What activity of the Spirit does this name signify? (b.)
 - b. He will be the presence of _____ in us so that we will not feel or act like orphans.
 - c. He will be the Spirit of T _____ in us so that we will not believe—or live—lies.

4. Look up Galatians 4:4-6. Isn't it strange that the Third Person of the Trinity would be sent from heaven into your heart to cry out "Abba-Father" — the name of the First Person of the Trinity? Why do you suppose the Holy Spirit is doing this?

5. Look up Romans 8:15; 16-17; 26-27. Describe (from the text) how the work of the Holy Spirit fights against "spiritual orphanhood" in your life.
 - a. vs. 15 -
 - b. vs. 16-17 -
 - c. vs. 26-27 -

6. Study the ORPHANS VS. SONS — pages 1-15, 1-16. Try to honestly determine where you are acting like an "ORPHAN" instead of a "son." As you work through the list, make a tick mark by five of the items in the left hand column that describe your most fleshly tendencies.

List your five "ORPHAN NUMBERS" _____ Will you share one of them with us?

ENCOURAGEMENT TO PERSEVERE: Yes, it is painful to think about these things, but the five items we have listed (and the many others we haven't) are just the fruits of a deeper problem. Will you commit yourself to investigating why you think, do and feel and act in the ways on the "left side?" Praise God, we are not alone! We have a friend in the Holy Spirit. He is ready to show us the deep roots of self that drive these sinful behaviors. When you see yourself "acting like the left side," try consciously resting in Jesus' righteousness for you. See what power there is in simple, Gospel faith! This is the way to grow in your Christian life. *"This is the victory that overcomes the world— even our faith!"* (1 Jn. 5:4)



The Famous Hunter Dockery

"SIBERIAN HUMILITY TEST"

The Rev. Hunter Dockery is the World Harvest Mission Team-Leader for our church planting work in Dublin, Ireland. In the early 1990's, Hunter began to open up a wider ministry for SONSHIP Training with church leaders in the old Soviet Union.

He found that while the evangelical church had grown significantly under communist domination, the stifling atmosphere of a socialist regime had filled the underground church with a spirit of suspicion and fear. The fruit of this was that the church became highly inbred, legalistic (many man-made rules) and sorely lacking in freedom, love and joy. For example: On one occasion, a young pastor stood to open a SONSHIP session with prayer. He was stopped by an older pastor who rebuked him harshly. The top button of the young man's shirt (the one behind the knot on his tie) was unbuttoned. *It was improper to address God with that button undone, the older pastor chided!*

Christian legalism, on whatever continent it is found, breeds spiritual pride, judgmentalism, lovelessness, fear and gossip—and destroys the joy of the Holy Spirit. Hunter, seeing the sad spiritual state, hardness of heart and unteachability of God's leaders, sketched out what he now calls, the "Siberian Humility Test." When he gave it to the men, they fell under the conviction of the Holy Spirit, began to sniffle, then weep and then openly repent. A revival broke out that day in 1996 that continues. When we in Africa heard about this "test," we e-mailed our mission in the United States and asked them to track it down. They sent this e-mail.

----- message separator -----

FROM: dave@whm.org (Dave McCarty) at Internet

TO: jwlong@maf.org (Johnny Long) at Internet

SUBJECT: Message from Hunter Dockery in Dublin - re: Siberia

Johnny, I found it! This is Hunter's "Siberian Humility Test" given to that group of unteachable pastors and church leaders in Novosibirsk, Siberia Russia. God used it to open their eyes to their deeper sin patterns (they were superb "lawkeepers") and to break their cold, proud hearts so that they began to repent and fall in love with the Good News about Jesus all over again.

1. Do you take criticism well?
2. Are you a good listener?
3. Are you in frequent power struggles and arguments?
4. Do you often believe you are the only one right?
5. Do you ever take the lowest place?
6. Are you known as gentle and merciful, or is there a hard edge to your personality?
7. Is anger often lurking just below the surface?
8. Would others characterize you as critical?
9. Is prayer the first movement of your life?
10. Is it important to defend yourself to others?



The End of the Struggle

Adapted for *SONSHIP for Africa* from an article by Stanley Voke

"Jesus, Thy blood and righteousness — my beauty are, my glorious dress."

— Count Ludwig Nicholas von Zinzendorf, 1739 —

A LITTLE BOY came home from Sunday School one day and said, "Mama, we had a new hymn today. It said that Jesus knows all about our struggles." Then he added thoughtfully, "You know, that isn't right. We don't struggle, only snails struggle!"

This reminds me of two pictures that appeared in a Christian magazine, one of a snail crawling, the other, of a bird flying. The caption under them read: "What are you, snail or bird?" During the Ugandan Revival, a group of Christians were returning home after a conference. They were singing and their faces were full of joy. Some of the people who saw them passing said, "Look at those Christians! They are like birds flying!" But those happy believers knew how different it had been before the conference when their hearts were not right with Jesus. Then they had felt more like snails—earth bound, self-bound, struggling, instead of soaring.

All of us must look at the perfect Law of God and run, wounded, to the sinner's place. But if we remain there, feeling sinful, we will become "spiritual snails"—struggling. Seeing our sin cannot set us free; we need to see Jesus! "For every one look at your sin, take ten looks at Christ!" counseled Robert Murray McChesney the great Welsh preacher.¹ It is looking at Jesus that makes Christians "fly!" But, many of us have "looking problems!" Why is that?

THE STRUGGLE FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS

Doctor J. B. Phillips translated Romans 10:4 this way: "Christ means the end of the struggle for righteousness!" Think about it: There is in you and me a fierce struggle to earn and keep our own righteousness. That is the reason it is so hard to come to, and keep returning to, "The Sinner's Place." Looking is painful.

This struggle is as old as Adam, Eve and Eden. When God charged them with sin, they first blamed one another and then the serpent

—all the while wearing the clothes of fig leaves they had made to try to cover themselves from the holy eyes of God. By the time Jesus came, man's struggle for righteousness had become a highly developed system designed to earn righteousness by "the works of the law." Paul lamented that his Jewish kinsmen were always "going about to establish their own righteousness"² rather than submitting themselves to the gift-righteousness of God.

Aren't we all that way? If you have been to the ocean, you have probably built, or seen others build "castles" of sand. The problem is that the tide always comes in. No matter how you try to reinforce your sand house, the relentless waves eventually pound it down. We do the same thing (spiritually) when we labor to build up defenses against the "waves" of other people's criticisms. For some of us, life becomes one long struggle to be what we know in our hearts we are not.



What are you - a snail . . .

Fig. 1-9

THE STRUGGLE FOR ATTAINMENT

One way we can struggle for our own righteousness is by struggling to reach some standard of perfection. Of course God's Law holds up a perfect standard, but the danger is that our lives may become just one prolonged attempt to reach it. Then we become Christians living under law instead of grace—under tension and guilt, instead of the peace Jesus' righteousness can give us as a gift.

Sometimes we set the standard ourselves. We picture in our minds the kind of Christian



... or a bird?

we think we *ought* to be, then chase after this ideal image. It is like seeing this person we "ought" to be standing on a high mountain. He urges us on as we struggle vainly up the slopes, but he never offers us a helping hand.

Or, we may let other people set the standard for us. People are forever telling us what we ought to be. We hear good sermons and read "how-to" books that show us the kind of Christian we should be—which only makes us feel guilty if we're sensitive, and self-satisfied if we're not. People put us on pedestals expecting this and that of us—until life can become one long struggle to be what others demand. So, we labor on under their law, trying to keep up their standards—while behind us is God's relentless law never letting us off, never lifting us up.

Are you a Christian living under law? Do you live under a sense of condemnation because you feel all the time you ought to be a better Christian, who "prays more, does more, gives more?" If so, you are chained to a moral yardstick, and living under a yoke and a burden, and all the while Jesus wants to give you rest! "Come unto me all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn of me, for my yoke is easy, my burden is light." (Matthew 11:28-30)

THE STRUGGLE TO EARN AND KEEP OUR REPUTATION

Another aspect of this struggle for righteousness is the quest for *reputation*. All of us are "reputation conscious!" Some of us have a reputation—it may be for holiness, efficiency, leadership, preaching, good housekeeping—anything! Others of us wish we had a reputation, but once acquired (or assumed), it can haunt us, dog us, beat us down, and wear us out. Bondage to reputation is sheer slavery, and we need to see it for what it is—just another form of the struggle for our own righteousness. It makes us unwilling to be seen as weak in or failing at anything.

THE STRUGGLE FOR APPEARANCE

Our struggle for reputation inevitably becomes a struggle for appearance since at some point we end up being dishonest about who we really are. Jesus said about the Pharisees, "Everything they do is done for men to see."³ For them, appearance was everything. A teacher illustrated this to children by using three eggs, each with a label. One egg was labeled "STALE," declaring that was not what it used to be. The second egg was "HALF-HATCHED," announcing that it was not what it hoped to be. The third was labeled "ROTTEN." It looked good, but it was honest enough to admit that it was not what it appeared to be.



"The Image Is the Thing"
We "wear" our achievements, possessions and even our spiritual gifts as types of righteousness to "cover" us.

Fig. 1-11

Like me, do you sometimes pretend to be what you are not? That was the Pharisees' game, and their struggle for appearance inevitably led them into hypocrisy. These clever men succeeded in appearing righteous in the eyes of men, but they failed miserably in the eyes of Jesus who always insisted on judging them by what was in their hearts! (Matt. 23:13f) The trouble with this sort of success is that we dare not ever be failures—for if we are to keep our reputations we can never admit to ignorance or sin. That would be like destroying our own house of sand before the tide comes in! No, we feel that it is better to struggle on—even to the breaking point—rather than admit to some need that would let others see who we really are.

The tragedy of these vain attempts to produce righteousness is this: as we slip ever deeper into the notion that we can (and must) earn favor with God, the Gospel loses its power in our lives. Romans 10:5 tells us: "The man who perfectly obeys the law shall find life in it" (Phillips). In theory, if we could keep the law perfectly, we would be blessed, but we cannot, so, although we try, we end up being cursed. And, when we consider that Jesus and Paul taught that the Law is nothing more or less than loving God and others perfectly, we

see how utterly impossible God's standard really is (Matt. 22:37-40; Rom. 13:8ff). Because we are sinners, the Law will always be a "means of death"—not because the standard is faulty, but because we are hopelessly unable to reach it. (Rom. 8:3)

CHRIST — THE END OF THE STRUGGLE

What a relief it is when we see Jesus as the end of all this! "HE is the end of the struggle for righteousness"—since He not only fulfilled the law for us, but was cursed for us as well. He not only attained our perfection but atoned for our imperfection. There is nothing more to struggle for! He has done everything for us, and God asks nothing now but our repentance and faith in Him.

*All the fitness He requires
is to feel your need of Him.*

Joy Davidman has put it beautifully:

"The only way to get rid of sin is to admit it. Without such honesty, repentance, forgiveness and grace are impossible. The Christian does not go around all the time feeling guilty. For him, sin is a burden he can lay down, for he can admit it, repent and be forgiven. It is the unfortunate creature who denies the existence of sin in general and his own in particular who must go on carrying it. The way to freedom consists in honest confession and repentance that can open our hearts to the Comforter."⁴

To open our souls to God's grace means that He not only saves us from being the people we are, but changes us into who we ought to be! How simple it is! "The only way to get rid of sin is to admit it!" Why is this so hard? Surely because it means letting go of our own righteousness—which is the very thing we do not like doing. Yet, how can we believers have Christ's perfect robe of righteousness if we insist on weaving our own? We can't.

Jesus is our perfect righteousness. When we come to Him, we need no other. The struggle for righteousness is over and he is our reputation and our glory! There is no need to fear coming to the sinner's place, for when we do, we come to the Cross, lay down our own working, stop trying to be what we are not, and admit instead what we are. At that point we can trust in Christ's righteousness once again and so be free from the struggle for our own. This is the place of grace, rest and peace the Gospel was designed to give us. Wonderfully,

this rest in the Gospel gives us the tireless energy we need for serving the Christ who died for us and lives for us!

So, isn't it time to . . .

*"Lay your deadly doing down,
Down at Jesus' feet.
Stand in Him — in Him alone,
Wonderously complete!"*



¹ *Memor and Remains*, Robert Murray McCheyne - p. 252

² Romans 10:3;

³ Matthew 23:8

⁴ Davidman, Joy, *Smoke on the Mountain: The Ten Commandments for Today*, Hodder & Stoughton, London, 1955.

This article has been adapted by J.W. Long for SONSHIP for Africa from the (out of print) booklet: *Personal Revival* by Stanley Voke, Christian Literature Crusade, 1964.



Dear Reader,

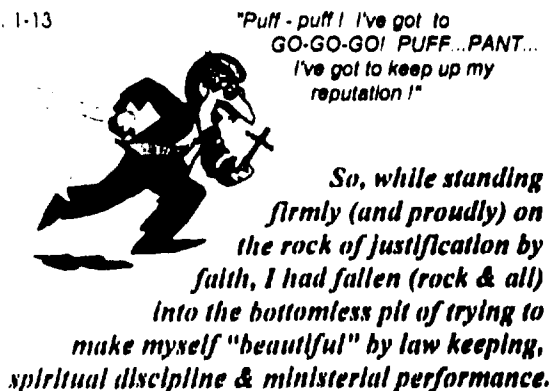
Voke's article was an assigned reading at SONSHIP Week, a renewal conference for Christian leaders that my wife Becky and I attended in November 1990—a ministry of World Harvest Mission in Philadelphia, PA USA. Mind you, I went to this conference not because I sensed any need in my life, but in a last-ditch effort to find some magic formula to change the congregation I had been pastoring for ten years. What a shock to discover that the one who needed changing was me. Since then, God has been at work transforming my life, family and ministry through the truth that "Jesus is the end of the struggle for righteousness." But, in 1990, I was blind to the inner struggle for personal significance that was destroying me.

After 25 years in ministry as a youth pastor, church planter in Africa, and a senior pastor in the US, I was unaware of my desperate need for spiritual renewal. My doctrine and outward life were pure, but my heart relationship to God was shallow and dishonest. It never occurred to me that my soul was withering away because of the secret sins hidden there. What sins? Radical self-centeredness, sexual lust, vanity, and pride in what I felt was a successful ministry. I had become a Christian actor—someone who could always say and do the right thing at the right time to win increasingly greater leadership roles. In fact, Christian role-playing

had virtually replaced the passionate "first love" I had once felt for Christ as a new believer in college. Once, there had been a vital prayer life, a hunger for the Bible, and a simple, intimate, childlike dependence on Jesus. But my love for "the truth" had replaced my love for The True One. As my reputation as an effective leader and conference speaker grew, so did my love for the praise of men. (cf. John 5:41-44) The praise and approval of people became a "false gospel" to me, an idol that fed my soul and made me feel worthy when I earned it, and fearful when I didn't. I felt I had to boast about everything I did for God. It made me feel, well... righteous. I could quote Jeremiah 17:9 but didn't see my heart's true condition. I felt that God was fortunate to have a guy like me on his team.

My once childlike faith and intimacy with Jesus were gone, but I felt strong—mature! Yes, I knew God as Savior, but I didn't think of Him as my "Abba-Father." (Rom. 8:15) Nor did I sense a need to depend on the Holy Spirit to live my life or empower my ministry. After all, I had a new heart, a strong dose of willpower, a sound theological education and a dynamic "gift-package." What more did I need?

Fig. 1-13



LOVE is the cardinal fruit of the Spirit, but since I was not relying on the Spirit, really loving God or man was impossible. (Matt. 22:37-40) God had called me to love people. I was using people. My inner motives for serving God had become so twisted that instead of laboring out of a joyful obedience fed by love, I was more often than not driven by a sense of duty and a deep desire to be *thought of* as a wonderful pastor and mature Christian leader. What *people* thought of me had become more important than what *God* thought of me! (Just like the Pharisees in John 5:44.)

When I was struck by the weight of Voke's words about the struggle for righteousness, attainment, reputation and appearance, I was *cut to the heart!* During the course of the Sonship conference, God exposed me to the core. It was painful. But along with the appalling realization that I had been stealing God's glory, his love rolled over me like a mighty ocean—melting the heart of this wayward son who had for so long forgotten that all he needed to be "beautiful" was Jesus blood and righteousness! The Father spoke to my heart, "Johnny, let go of your reputation; let it all go; you don't need it; I love you, son; let me cleanse you; let me make you beautiful; let my Son be your righteousness; that is what he died for.

His love was irresistible. I surrendered. I yielded up my "record," and suddenly it was like 1962—like being converted again! I was set free, free of my need to earn and own a reputation. I had (and have) the reputation of Jesus! I understand now why Paul said, "May I never boast except in the cross of Christ Jesus my Lord through whom I have been crucified to the world and the world to me!" (Gal. 6:14) As I repented of my idolatry, my "first love" for him—and my joy—returned! Why? Because once again, I was willing to be what I really am—just a big sinner who every day stands in need of a Big Savior! (e.g. Paul in 1 Tim. 1:15)

I've known these great hymns by Wesley and von Zinzendorf for years, but now they are my "freedom songs" in the Gospel!

Jesus, Thy blood and righteousness
my beauty are, my glorious dress:
'midst flaming worlds, in these arrayed
with joy shall I lift up my head.
Bold shall I stand in that great day;
for who aught to my charge shall lay?
Fully absolved from these I am,
from sin, and fear, and guilt and shame!

— Ludvig von Zinzendorf, 1739 (comp. Rev. 6:13)

"Arise my soul, arise! Shake off thy guilty fears!
The Bleeding Sacrifice in my behalf appears!
Before the Throne my surety stands,
my name is written on His hands!
Five bleeding wounds He bears, received on Calvary.
They pour effectual prayers; they strongly plead for me!
'Forgive him, O forgive!' they cry —
'Nor let that ransomed sinner die!'
My God is reconciled! His pardoning voice I hear!
He owns me for His child; I can no longer fear!
With confidence I now draw nigh —
and 'FATHER-ABBA FATHER!' cry!"

— Charles Wesley, 1742 cf. Rom. 8:15; 34; Heb. 7:25



The rediscovery of these basic truths of the Gospel is transforming my thought life, my relationship to God and others—especially to Becky and our three children ages 27, 23 and 14. At last I am able and willing to look at and repent of my sins. I am still a big mess—I just repent a lot! Nevertheless, the power of the Gospel to change a big sinner like me as a husband, father and pastor has amazed my family and church. The new confidence we have in the power of the Gospel has led Becky and Elizabeth (14) and I to return to Kenya with Mission to the World and World Harvest Mission to write *SONSHIP for Africa* for the benefit of Christian leaders (like yourself) across the continent.

So, what about you? Do you need to join me in rediscovering the simplicity and power of the Gospel? Will you follow the growing host of brave African leaders who are joining the "Big Sinners Club"? Will you ask God to break you? Will you surrender your heart to what the German reformer Martin Luther called "the wholly alien righteousness of Christ"? Join us! We are learning to repent of the awful business of using God to gain honor and praise for ourselves. Join us in dying to self and living for Christ alone. If renewal like this continues to spread, Africa will turn to Christ as she stands in amazement that God is powerful enough to humble proud, self-serving Christians! Nothing is as attractive to an unbeliever as a humble, broken Christian.

Yours — Clothed in His Righteousness,

 John W. Long, Jr.

July 1997



MARTIN LUTHER'S INVITATION TO JOIN "THE BIG SINNER'S CLUB"

On August 21st, 1544, Martin Luther wrote a letter to George Spalatin, one of his faithful and trusted coworkers in the Reformation. It seems that Spalatin had given some pastoral advice to a family that he later came to realize was harmful. He was overcome with grief and guilt—convinced that he, of all people,

should have known better. In fact, he was so stricken by his failure that he became depressed and went to bed—refusing to be consoled. When Luther learned of this, he wrote to him. Below is an excerpt from that letter. It is brimming over with hearty sarcasm designed to shock Spalatin back to his spiritual senses.

"... My faithful request and admonition is that you join our company and associate with us, who are real, great, and hard-bolted sinners! You must by no means make Christ to seem petty and trivial to us—as though He could be our Helper only when we want to be rid from imaginary, nominal, and childish sins. No, no! That would not be good for us. Christ must rather be a Savior and Redeemer from real, great, grievous and damnable transgressions and iniquities—yes, from the very greatest and most shocking sins—in brief, from all sins added together in a grand total..."

One time Dr. Staupitz (his tutor) comforted me when I was ... suffering from the same affliction as you. He said to me:

*'Aha! You want to be a painted sinner, and accordingly, expect to have in Christ a painted Savior! You will have to get used to the belief that Christ is a real Savior and that you are a real sinner! For God is neither jesting nor dealing in imaginary affairs, but He was greatly and most assuredly in earnest when He sent His own Son into the world and sacrificed Him for our sakes.'*²



Fig. 1-14



¹ By the word "painted," Luther means "beautified" or "prettied up"—implying that Spalatin's Jesus can't deal with the truly heinous sins we commit, only the "nice" little ones.

² Luther, Martin. *Companion to the Contemporary Christian*. Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, 1982.

The End of the Struggle Workshop

A COMPANION TO "THE END OF THE STRUGGLE" ARTICLE

by J. W. Long, Jr.

1. What was one of the most healthy features of the early "East African Revival" movement?

- a. apostolic signs & wonders
- b. all-night prayer meetings
- c. the public repentance of sin
- d. full churches

2. What do you think was the one thing the Pharisees valued more highly than anything else?

The _____ of men. (See: John 5:41, 44; Matthew 23:1-7)

But, if you had asked the *Pharisees*, what would they have said they valued most highly?

The G _____ of God.

3. Do you see a struggle to "*establish your own righteousness*" in your life? (Most of us can.)

What are some of the ways you have tried to "be somebody," or "earn a reputation" so you could feel more acceptable to God or others? Stanley Voke has mentioned these three:

A. THE STRUGGLE FOR ATTAINMENT: Attainments are not necessarily bad, but "wearing" them as your righteousness is. They become "idols"—substitutes for Christ.

1) One standard I have set for myself is:

2) A standard that I have let other people set for me is: (What and Who?)

B. THE STRUGGLE FOR REPUTATION: Having a "good name" is a good thing. (Prov. 22:1) but struggling to earn one for your own glory is not. Boast in the cross alone! (Gal. 6:14)

1) I feel that I have built a good reputation because of my _____.

2) I want other people to notice my _____.

3) I am under a lot of pressure to _____ so that my hard-earned reputation for _____ will not be hurt.

C. THE STRUGGLE FOR APPEARANCE: (Think of the eggs, "Stale," "Half-hatched" and Rotten)

1) I am not really what I seem to be in the area of _____.

2) So, now I am forced to _____ to keep up my image.

4. Does all this mean that God wants me to be unsuccessful and fail? Of course not!

He loves you! He wants you to succeed! But when you do, he doesn't want you to "*find life*" in it, or "*wear it*" to give you standing before him and others. True success is knowing God and bringing glory to him with your life—not building a platform from which to proclaim your own glory to the world.



5. I confess: The Holy Spirit is showing me that I have a real problem! I have not been fully resting in Jesus' righteousness. Therefore I believe he wants me to take these steps:

A.

B.

C.

6. How might taking these steps change my relationship to God? Be specific as to your attitude toward, relationship to, and your service for him.

A. My heart-attitude toward him:

B. My person-to-person and heart-to-heart relationship with him:

C. My service to him:

7. How might taking these three steps affect my relationship to the other people God has sovereignly put in my life? Be specific in describing the new Jesus-like behavior you believe the Holy Spirit wants to empower you to show in your relationships with the following:

A. All People in General.

B. Some Special "People Group" (race, tribe, nationality, etc.)

C. Three Specific Individuals:

Person 1.

Person 2.

Person 3.



THE INFAMOUS SONSHIP "TONGUE ASSIGNMENT"

TRY TO KEEP THIS LAW FOR ONE WEEK

DON'T DO THESE:

1. Don't gossip. (confess someone else's sins)
2. Don't complain about anything.
3. Don't blameshift or make excuses.
4. Don't defend yourself.
5. Don't boast about anything. . .

DO THESE:

1. Speak only good about others.
2. Thank God for his plan for your life.
3. Rejoice, you're worse than you think!
4. Admit when you are wrong or sin.
5. ... except in your weaknesses (2 Cor. 12:9)

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5. ... except in your weaknesses (2 Cor. 12:9)

A Daughter Becomes a Son

***“The Time Line” — Looking Into Our Past for
Patterns of Orphanhood and Sonship***



Fig. 2-1



The Grace of God to One Who Was "Doing the Best She Could" A Testimony to Sonship by Becky Long

How I rejoice that the Father has been teaching me about living by grace for these past eleven years! How did I live before? I was a Christian living under law. Almost everything I did was driven by duty. Now? Oh, I still fight the pull to return to the old way some days, but Jesus has set me free from my slavery to the deep bondages that were destroying me, my family, and any possibility that the Gospel might change me more deeply. Now I understand. To fully appropriate the grace of God, one must despair of self instead of depending on it, and lay hold of God's gift of the righteousness of Christ. Before this joyous revelation in 1986, I was living in self-reliance, living for the praise of people, and obsessed with the desire to be righteous in and of myself. Sad to say, all of this was the action of a heart that had been taught from childhood that the blood of Jesus shed for her on the cross was the only way of salvation! Actually, I had the salvation part of it right. It was the sanctification part that was a complete muddle. I felt I had to keep God happy with me. *"Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect"* was my "life verse."

I am the third of seven children from a Presbyterian minister's home. My father knew Jesus as his Lord and Savior, but, by his own admission later in life, he never learned to rest fully in the gracious love of the Father. As a result, his life and ministry seemed to be driven more by duty than the deep love he had for Jesus—a love over which he would often weep. He never quite understood how to live as a loved son. I loved my father very much, and am grateful for the way he taught the Scriptures to his family. But because of the legalistic atmosphere in our home, it has taken me many years to begin to live by faith with love as my goal. My father and mother are both in heaven now, and because they have been made perfect, they are rejoicing that their daughter is learning a better way to live.



Fig. 2-2

In many respects, our family resembled an Old Testament Jewish family. We sought to fulfill the law—but out of our own resources, not by faith (Rom. 10:2, 3). We knew the law and we expected perfect obedience to it—from ourselves and one another. Because there were seven children in our family, we all helped with family chores, including the hard work of keeping a large family garden. We had charts posted in several rooms of our house to ensure that everyone knew exactly what his or her job was and when it should be done. Organization is necessary for any family or society, and I am glad we were taught personal responsibility from an early age. But we did not seem to be able to move from

duty and responsibility to love. As I think back on it, this seems strange because Jesus said that love was the fulfillment of law! I say that it seems strange, because in our family, the Scriptures, family worship, discussions about God and the Christian life were our daily bread. Our failure to sense that something was terribly wrong is a tribute to the deceptive power of the flesh. We congratulated ourselves that we were obeying the law to the best of our ability when all the while we were failing to live up to what the law really required—love (Rom. 13:8-10). The crux of our problem was in the phrase, *"to the best of our ability."* Our ability is the great enemy of grace (Gal. 3:1-5).

Now I have three children of my own, so I know how hard it is to deal with children on the basis of grace, mercy and forgiveness rather than law. My heart grieves for my parents as I remember their struggles to do the best they could at teaching us. But, again, that is the problem—self-reliance—trusting in the flesh to carry you along from day to day.

My father taught us the Scriptures so that we would *"be responsible for our lives"* since we would know God's law and what he expected of And there was no double standard. My father tried to live up to the same

high mark he set for us. He drove himself to obey and serve Jesus with his whole heart. He truly did the best he could, but the yardstick he measured himself (and us) by was not high enough! The aim in our family was obedience to God's law, and when any of us failed to measure up to the standard, the rest of us would become angry. I share this not to excuse myself, but when I married and had children, I began to behave in exactly the same way. It seemed normal to me. I justified it. After all, other people were to blame for my anger. They didn't meet my standards! After an outburst of anger, I would often say to myself, "It was not my fault; if only I could live alone with Jesus, he and I would be perfect." I was sure that the stress in my life was everyone else's fault. I was a Christian, but I was very judgmental and unforgiving of others. At the same time, I was filled with self-condemnation for my own failures. I wanted to be perfect, and so I was . . . a perfect mess!

"If only I could live alone with Jesus, he and I would be perfect."

While attending a Christian college, I met and fell in love with Johnny Long, a man who aspired to be a cross-cultural church planter. After graduation, we were married, went to seminary, and into youth ministry. After the birth of our son, John Wade III (now 28), we set out for Kenya, East Africa to work with World Presbyterian Mission. Rebecca Elizabeth (24) was born in Nairobi. What a trying time Africa was, but it had nothing to do with the place. We had traveled half way around the world, but we took ourselves along! Although fruit was borne among Kenyans that remains to this day, our term was marred by conflict with our fellow-American co-workers. And I cringe when I remember how busy we were trying to earn "ministry righteousness." After five years (1973 to 1977), we resigned in frustration (with everyone else) and entered the pastoral ministry in the United States. It is a testimony to the power of the Holy Spirit that despite our weakness, Jesus continued to use us to build His Kingdom. But in our hearts and family there was turmoil, lack of forgiveness, bitterness, anger, fear, and pain. But Johnny and I were "doing the best we could," and honestly thought all Christians lived like we did. (Most of them we knew did.) As we raised our two older children, outward obedience to the law was our goal. When our son went away to

college, the flaws in our self-reliant lifestyle began to show as he acted out his rebellion against God and us. We can see now that we bore much of the responsibility for his behavior. As Paul said in Romans 7, the law, rather than promoting true holiness, tends to stir up more sin in the human heart. We ruled by law, and very predictably reaped chaos.

Mary Elizabeth was born in 1982, and five years later, the Father began to bless me with the tape ministry of Dr. Jack Miller, pastor, professor at Westminster Theological Seminary, and founder of World Harvest Mission in Philadelphia. It is difficult to put into words the difference that understanding the role of grace in the Christian

life has made in our lives, but I'll try. In 1990, Johnny and I attended World Harvest's SONSHIP Week, a renewal conference for pastors and their

wives. That week was the culmination of years of searching for both of us, and the beginning of a still ongoing surrender of our lives to Christ. How is the Gospel changing us?

My feelings of self-condemnation are giving way to a childlike rest in the Father's love for me. The Holy Spirit is gradually working true obedience in us—what Paul called "the obedience of faith." (Rom. 1:5) We are learning to live lives of repentance and forgiveness towards one another. We have been able to repent to our two older children and ask forgiveness for our harshness. We are enjoying the great adventure of raising Elizabeth in a home in which we live with a mutual consciousness that we are all big sinners who really need Jesus everyday. We are able to share with one another from the heart. We bear one another's burdens. Our home is an increasingly loving place. We don't need to hide from one another. Since we know God's mercy and forgiveness of us every day, we have grace and mercy to give to one another. We have peace in times of trouble (well, most of the time) and a palpable sense of the Father's presence with us and provision for us. We pray together about the deepest issues in our hearts. There is a new vibrancy in our daily communion with our Abba, and a profound sense of the reality of Jesus' constant intercession before the Father on our behalf. (Rom. 8:34; Heb. 7:25) We are learning say "no" to our self-reliant spirits, and depend on the Holy Spirit

for the power to do ministry. We have a deepening sense of our utter inability to handle life apart from God's grace. As for the struggle for righteousness, we are learning to abandon our attempts to produce a righteousness of our own by the law, and rest in the righteousness of Christ which is ours by faith. That *faith* changes us, because it unites us to Christ who *is* our life!

Johnny and I have a new ministry. Strange as it may sound, we want to spend the rest of our lives *sharing the Gospel with Christians!* It is only as we learn to live our lives, "in the atmosphere of the gospel" (as Jerry Bridges put it) that we can be empowered to live the Christian life described in the New Testament—a life for the glory of God. The vehicle for this ministry is, as you well know, the discipleship course, *SONSHIP for Africa*.

I failed so miserably for so long, that now I want my life to be a "window of grace" through which you can see the love of Jesus for you. In fact, if my story has struck a responsive chord and you sense that you are not living in the grace of the Gospel, please feel free to contact us. Perhaps we can study together and learn more of the Father's love for us in the Gospel. God wants us to live like the loved sons and daughters of God that we are. Our "Abba" is the King of the Universe. He is ready to lead us into a new life in which we can resist the pull to think, live and act like lonely, self-reliant orphans.

Yours in the Father's strong love,

Becky Long

Rebecca Morse Long

Post Script

There are books *and there are books* on how to live the Christian life, but there is one I consider to be the best because it is biblical and honest. There are no easy 1-2-3 steps to holiness here, just the true story of one woman's painful struggle to learn the lessons of living by grace. The author is my "mother in the Gospel," Rose Marie Miller—wife of the late Jack Miller who developed the first *SONSHIP* course for the USA in 1986. Not only

has she mentored me in grace, but the struggles of our early lives as Christians are eerily parallel—struggles chronicled in her book. (Both of us were desperately trying to please God and others in our own strength. Perhaps you share this with us.) May I highly recommend for your growth in grace,

'From Fear to Freedom — Living as Sons & Daughters of God.'¹



Adinkra
symbol of God's
faithfulness.
The Akan, Ghana
Fig. 2-3

How good is this book? You need not take my word for it. Here is best-selling author Jerry Bridges' recommendation: *From Fear to Freedom is a powerful and captivating book. By freely opening her own life to us, Rose Marie Miller allows the Holy Spirit to probe deeply into ours. This book is 'must' reading for those who want to live daily in the freedom and joy of God's grace.*"

Dan Allender, psychologist and author of *Bold Love* and *The Wounded Heart* had this to say: "This book invites the soul to a celebration—a party. It sings of grace and offers a vision of hope we have lost in our day. No age is more in need of the radical call to live as sons and daughters of God. We strive endlessly; we are exhausted, depleted, and lonely. Is this the abundant life? What is the problem? Few have the courage of Rose Marie Miller to say it simply and forthrightly—the problem is self-righteousness. Rose Marie offers us a profoundly personal and painful glimpse into her story, exposes the dark corners of our self-righteousness, and invites us to dance with God. Get ready to party."

I will close with just one story from Rose Marie's life: As the power of the Gospel for living the Christian life began to dawn on her, one day she told her husband,

"Jack, when I think about my life before, if you could have engraved two words on my gravestone to describe it, they would have been, 'SHE TRIED.' Now they would be, 'SHE BELIEVED.'"



¹ Harold Shaw Publishers, Wheaton, IL, 1994. Available for KSh. 250/= or US \$5.00 + relevant postage. *SONSHIP*, Box 76264 Yaya Centre, Nairobi, Kenya. Tel. 56-04-21

CHRISTIANS Come in THREE "FLAVORS"

PHARISEE, FAILURE & SON

by Johnny & Becky Long — a Recovering "Pharisee" and a Recovering "Failure"

ICE CREAM comes in flavors. Christians do too—three of them. Unfortunately, two are "orphan" flavors.

1. "Repenting Publican" (*Tastes delicious! Nothing is so delightful as a repenting sinner.*)
2. "Self-Righteous Pharisee" (*Tastes terrible! But is sure that it must be wonderful.*) And,
3. "Failure" (*Tastes quite nice, though may get a bit tart. It is sure that it tastes horrible.*)

We jest of course, but with a point. We will leave our discussion of the Publican for S-10, *Repentance As a Way of Life*, and concentrate here on the Failure as contrasted to the Pharisee.

The Failure is neither the repenting Publican nor the self-righteous Pharisee, but a very common hybrid who is constantly "down on himself" and therefore able to be quite open about his sins and frequent failures. But openness about one's sins is not the same as taking them to the Cross. It can be a form of self-flagellation—which is the specialty of many Failures.

Rather than shunning self-criticism, he (or she) may be self-critical to the point of paralysis. He thinks he longs for a "really effective ministry for God," but what he really yearns for is a greater sense of self-worth. You will not hear him boasting, for it isn't his nature. He is a depressed Pharisee.

UNDERSTANDING THE "FAILURE" MODE

Becky describes her "Failure" self this way: *You wouldn't hear me boasting loudly about my many accomplishments for Christ! Unlike Johnny, I was a 'quiet Pharisee' with a lot of hidden anger and self-righteousness lurking inside. I might have appeared to be quite humble since I was frequently depressed and critical of myself about what I was NOT able to accomplish. But, humble I was not. In fact, my lack of success in producing an enviable 'record' was what I felt was my biggest*

problem! This really had more to do with my need to feel that I was 'accomplishing something meaningful for God' than a deep hunger that God get great glory from my life. In other words, the core of my life was self-serving—just like the Pharisee. My own righteousness was very precious to me, so I was frustrated with myself when I felt I had failed to meet my standard.

— RML —

THE PHARISEE & THE FAILURE

Differential Diagnosis

1. "Failures" appear humble, but they are actually self-absorbed which is the essence of self-righteousness. Deeply introspective and self-deprecating, they turn their deep desire to be perfect in on themselves. The Pharisee, on the other hand, compensates for his feelings of inadequacy by boasting. Since the Pharisee feels good about his record, he usually feels and acts "up." Since the Failure wants a reputation but feels he doesn't have one (though he often has a good one), he usually feels and acts "down." One is confident that his good works are meriting Jesus' ongoing acceptance (not salvation); the other fears that his are not good enough to win the same. Pharisees can be really obnoxious to be around because they are always telling "success stories." Failures can be depressing to be around because they often wallow in self pity. As Dr. Jack C. Miller used to say—with a touch of sarcasm:

"Self-pity is such a wonderful virtue. It enables you to despise yourself and others at the same time."

2. "Failures" grieve that they look like failures to themselves and others. They are sure that God is angry at them for not measuring up to (their own) high standard of being a "good Christian," a "powerful prayer warrior," an "effective evangelist," a "loving wife," a "good mother," an "ideal husband," etc.



Fig. 2-4

3. THE "FAILURE" sees his shortcomings (the fruit but not the root), "repents" of his lack of success, and then tries harder to produce the fruit that only the Holy Spirit can. But the power of the Spirit is not available because he is looking for strength in the wrong place. He is trapped in a vicious cycle of trying to draw living water from the broken cistern of self:

He tries harder... Life gets hard... He is frustrated... He fails... He feels guilty... He resolves to try even harder... It doesn't work... He gets more frustrated... fails..., etc.

A FAILURE LEARNS THE TRUTH

Wonder of wonders, the hope for both Pharisees and Failures is the Gospel. That may sound strange, but here is our story:

In November 1990, Becky and I attended "SONSHIP Week," a renewal seminar for church leaders sponsored by World Harvest Mission of Philadelphia. As the week wore on, the Holy Spirit was melting me—melting away the sugar-coated covering of my over-inflated view of my ministerial success (S1-16). Becky, on the other hand, was being crushed by a greater and greater sense of guilt and failure (S2-1). During a break time, she chatted with Dave McCarty, the conference director. "Dave", she said, *"the speakers keep telling us we need to see more of our sin, and that we should ask the Spirit to show us more of our sin; but all I ever see is my sin! I am depressed over it all the time!"*

You would have to know Dave McCarty to appreciate what came next. Suffice it to say, Dave, who likes to call himself "Dumb Sheep Dave," is a funny guy.

"NO, BECKY!", he said in his booming voice, **"THAT'S NOT YOUR SIN YOU'RE SEEING, THAT'S JUST YOUR IDOLATRY!"**

At first, she didn't get his point, but sensing that he was near the truth, asked him to elaborate. Dave explained that she wasn't depressed about her real sins—her root sins of self-centeredness and self-love, but only over her own image. He was exactly right! What Becky really wanted out of life was to be perfect—not the glory of God—but so that she could feel good about herself! She says of those days, *"I had a condemning heart."* Indeed, she was a classic Failure Mode.

"Becky," Dave explained, *"You have this ideal image of who you think you ought to be as a Christian, a mother and pastor's wife. That is your idolized self—your idol. That is how you wish you were, and how you wish people would see you. The problem is, the idol has cracks in it! It's not perfect, and that depresses you. You see, Becky, all that sorrow over your sin has absolutely nothing to do with God; it's completely self-centered."* Those were strong words, but Dave shared them as a fellow sinner—not as a condemning judge.

IS THERE HOPE FOR THE FAILURE?

Absolutely! Because of the Pharisee's overt pride, we instinctively know the answer to the his problem. He must *"abandon his own righteousness, and surrender to the righteousness of Christ!"* But the false humility of the Failure masks his pride, so we easily misdiagnose his problem and tell him, *"You just need to work on your self-image."* Wrong. Can you see that they share the same problem—a "Gospel problem?" How so? Both of them are focused on the "amount of righteousness" they think they are (or are not) producing. Neither lives with his eyes fixed on Jesus and his righteousness which comes by faith. Both live their lives in practical unbelief. They think of the Cross of Christ and the gift of his righteousness as something to get one started in the Christian life. But Paul writes,

For in the Gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: "The righteous will live by faith." — Rom. 1:17

HOW DOES THE FAILURE RECOVER?

Like the Pharisee, he must despair—really despair—of himself and his own righteousness. He must completely abandon his misguided attempts to produce a goodness of his own, and repent of his motive for wanting to do so! He must repent of the self-love that makes him want to "look good" in his own and others' eyes, and *surrender himself to the perfect righteousness of Christ, and then keep resting in Christ's merit as his own.* When he begins to do this, his depression will be broken and his joy will return. His focus in life will change. Instead of wanting to be perfect, he will glory in the perfection he has in Jesus, and begin living for the glory of God.



MY FATHER'S SHIRT

A Painful childhood memory becomes a door to faith and the knowledge of the healing love of God.

ONE day when I was very young, I saw my older sister hanging up my father's white business shirts on the clothes line to dry. Suddenly, I had the urge to do the same. He was my daddy too; I was his daughter who loved him in my childlike way, and I wanted to express it.

But, I couldn't reach the clothesline — it was too high! Then I saw a wheelbarrow in the yard. Its handles were just the right height for me. So I joyfully pinned the wet shirt to the iron handles—never noticing how rusty they were. When my dad got home he saw the shirt on the wheel barrow. He was furious and punished me severely for ruining his shirt.

RUST AND BLOOD

As I went through Sonship Week, with all the emphasis on our "Abba Father," I reflected on that old memory and others like it. I hadn't realized the impact those events had on me. Listening to the lectures, doing small group workshops and the counseling, I realized that *I had come to believe that my Father in heaven was no different than my earthly father.* Down through the years, I had not been listening when the Father described Himself to me in the Gospel.

This is what I had been missing—the Good News says that by faith in Christ and His perfect sacrifice, I am forgiven and free. He now loves me and is forever for me. He delights in me. In Christ, God has made me beautiful and pleasing to Him forever!

THE FATHER'S LOVE

So, the next morning I told Jeff Salasin (our Sonship counselor) that I thought I was beginning to understand the good news of God's love. I told him about the painful memory of my dad's shirt. Then I said,

"I guess if the Father saw me standing next to the wheel barrow with the ruined shirt on it, He would forget the shirt and hug me anyway."

"You still don't understand fully," Jeff replied, "God would not overlook the shirt but take it, put it on and wear it to work! And,

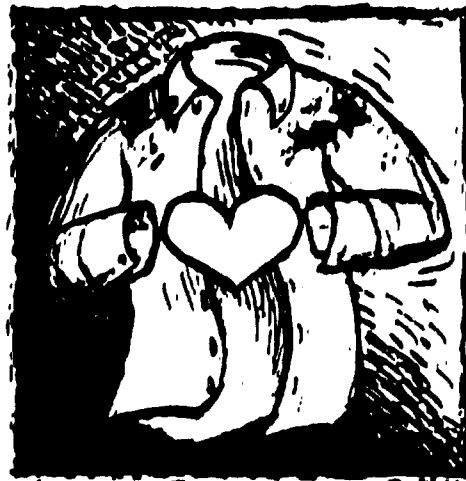
when someone commented on the rust marks, He would say, 'Let me tell you about my little girl and how much she loves me...!'"

I was overwhelmed.

I am beginning to realize that my Christian life has been a continual effort to earn God's pleasure by "getting the shirts hung up right." God would answer me if my prayer was "right." God would smile on me if my theology was correct. And since I knew how I had failed day by day in my works, I would sort of "sneak the shirts up on the line" and try to be away when God got home, so to speak.

I CAN LOVE!

My entire Christian life had been like that. I did not know how to live day to day without an overwhelming sense of failure to perform



Art by Les Swift

Fig. 2-5

up to what I thought God demanded. With that came a sense of God being disappointed and even disgusted with me.

How overpowering it is now to realize that because of Christ, I can experience a daily freedom to move out into people's lives. I can love others; I can obey God with my heart because I don't fear that He will be furious with me if I "get the shirt rusty." There is a freedom to love that I haven't known since the moment before my earthly father got home that sad day long ago.

AN UPDATE - FIVE YEARS LATER

It's hard to believe that it's been five years since my husband and I attended the Sonship conference! Prior to that, I had worn myself out trying to be a "godly" Christian mother and wife. I always felt that I had to be a better person than I was in order for God to be pleased with me. I had this constant weight of trying to live up to what Christ had done for me—so the Father would not be sorry he'd saved me and made me His child.

My husband and I tried hard to have a godly marriage and to be godly parents. In our minds, we had this ideal picture of what our family ought to look like. Reality was far different. Soon we were all becoming adversaries. My husband felt that my lack of respect and affection for him ruined his chances of achieving a godly marriage. I felt that if he loved me more and led our family better, then I would be able to do my part in respecting and affirming him. The kids seemed bent on destroying any resolve in us to be patient, kind instructors. We resented them for that.

So, how has Sonship training made a lasting impact on our lives? It showed us clearly the gospel message—that Christ died for sinners like me, my husband and our children. He paid the price to get eye level with us and embrace us where we are. The immediate impact of grace was to take the pressure off. My husband and I were able to repent

and forgive each other for our critical spirits and the demands we had placed on each other. We could see each other as fellow, forgiven sinners. We also began to learn to accept our children and show them Jesus as the only one who saves us from our sins.

The long-term affect has been crucial as we have had to deal with the special needs of our children—physical, mental and emotional. Before Sonship, we thought we had to "have our act together." We had to know the right thing to do and be able to do it. What a relief to know that God meets us where we need Him. *I don't have to know, I can ask. I don't have to pretend to be strong, I can be weak and come to Him. I can admit my weaknesses and my worst sins, and ask others to pray for me and our children.* It is here that we have seen numerous answers

***I don't have to know,
I can ask. I don't have
to pretend to be strong,
I can be weak and come
to Him. I can admit my
weaknesses and my
worst sins, and ask
others to pray for me . . .***

to specific prayers born out of our weakness and our sinfulness. What a joy to know our needs are a window into God's presence, not an obstacle that makes Him disgusted with us.

We still have much to learn, particularly about God's love for us in Jesus. We stumble instinctively. But we always know Who to return to. And that has been as significant a change in us as our initial salvation!



Editor's Note

These letters first appeared in the Fall 1993 and Summer 1997 issues of World Harvest's "HARVESTER" magazine. Les Swift, Editor.

The lectures and counseling the author refers to were during the course of "SONSHIP Week," an annual renewal conference for Christian leadership sponsored by World Harvest Mission of Philadelphia, PA, USA.

— JWL —

MY TIME LINE A SMALL GROUP WORKSHOP

Look into your heart's "memory bank."

Write brief notes that summarize your life's past events and future plans.

1. The Framework: Beginning with your birth-year, write in dates (years) for the listed events, noting where you lived, left home, etc.
2. Think about these categories. (They will help you remember and record your memories and your feelings about what you remember.)
 - a. the times you felt loved and accepted
 - b. the times when you felt unloved, ridiculed or lonely
 - c. the times when your life fell out of control
 - d. the times when you felt great joy or approval
 - e. the times when you felt powerless
 - f. the times when you felt powerful or successful
3. REFLECT & DISCUSS: What "COPING STRATEGIES" have you developed? (i.e. What are the ways you have learned to think and/or act to deal with or avoid pain and disappointment -- or ways you have found to gain the love and approval of others?)



I ARRIVED MY EARLY CHILDHOOD - 1 to 6 yrs

PRIMARY SCHOOL - 7 to 12 yrs

Date: / /

What do you remember about relationships with parents, siblings, etc.? Write about the significant people and events during your early school years. Include happy and sad times.

MY ADOLESCENCE & EARLY SECONDARY SCHOOL - 12 to 15 yrs

MY LATER TEENS - 16 to 19 yrs

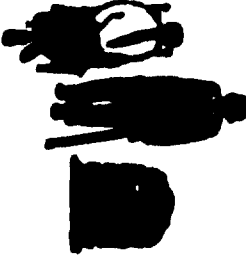
What do you remember about the difficult years of "coming of age"? How did it change relationships with your parents, siblings, friends? What about longer relationships? Same sex relationships? Partners?

MY UNIVERSITY or EARLY CAREER or GRADUATE SCHOOL DAYS - 20 to 24 yrs. YOUNG-ADULT YEARS 25 - 35 yrs. (DREAMS, PLANS & GOALS)
 Any "educational education" or were you "pre-occupied"? What was happening in your relationships with parents, friends, boy & girlfriends? Marriage plans? Pressures and relationships in the workplace? Career changes?



MIDDLE AGE (OR MY PLANS FOR IT)? - 40 to 50 yrs. LATE-MIDDLE AGE/RETIREMENT? - 50 to 60 yrs. OLD AGE / DEATH

Where do you hope to be (school, career, in your marriage and/or relationships at age 40? Where will you retire? Where will you live? Do many other people don't "think with" with you?



MY DEPARTURE
 Date: 77/77/77

HEAVEN

POSSIBLE LIFE GOALS & EVENTS — PAST, PRESENT OR FUTURE



A Son Meets with His Father in the Morning

Learning Daily Partnership with God



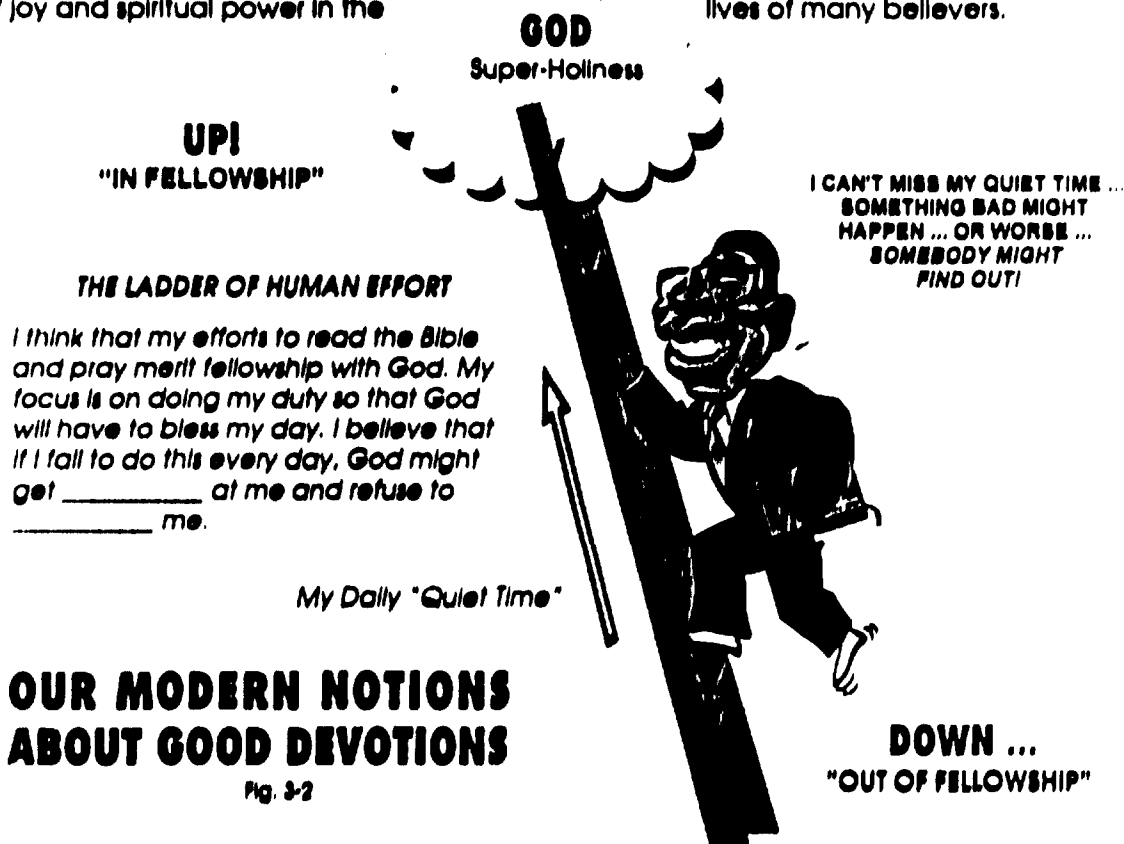
Busy Beatrice: Ready to "grow in the Lord," or...?

Fig. 3-1

A SON MEETS WITH HIS FATHER IN THE MORNING

The "Quiet Time" Redefined

INTRODUCTION: Do you ever feel like you are "allergic" to God? Do you sometimes avoid fellowship with him because you don't feel "pure" enough? In this lesson we learn that the Father desires our loving, joyful daily intimacy. Jesus purchased that right for us on the cross and this very moment he is seated at his Father's right hand to keep the way open. We also need to deal with the pressure we feel to have a "daily Quiet-Time," and see how such a good thing has become a burdensome duty instead of a source of joy and spiritual power in the lives of many believers.



THE BIG QUESTION IS: "HOW CAN I GET INTO CLOSE FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD - AND STAY THERE?" "IS THERE SOME 'SPIRITUAL LADDER' I MUST CLIMB?"

FOR REFLECTION & DISCUSSION: Try to get into the hearts of these Psalmists. Compare the way their souls hungered for God with your experience of a Quiet Time.

Psalm 42:1-2 Of the Sons of Korah. "As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When can I go and meet with God?"

Psalm 63:1-8 A Psalm of David. "O God, you are my God, earnestly I seek you; my soul thirsts for you, my body longs for you, in a dry and weary land where there is no water. I have seen you in the sanctuary and beheld your power and your glory. Because your love is better than life, my lips will glorify you. I will praise you as long as I live, and in your name I will lift up my hands.

My soul will be satisfied as with the richest of foods; with singing lips my mouth will praise you. On my bed I remember you; I think of you through the watches of the night. Because you are my help, I sing in the shadow of your wings. My soul clings to you; your right hand upholds me."

Psalms 84:1-4 Of The Sons of Korah. *"How lovely is your dwelling place, O LORD Almighty! My soul yearns, even faints, for the courts of the LORD; my heart and my flesh cry out for the living God. Even the sparrow has found a home, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young, a place near your altar, O LORD Almighty, my King and my God. Blessed are those who dwell in your house; they are ever praising you."*

QUESTIONS. . .

1. **HOW** does the experience of these psalmists compare with your experience of hungering and thirsting for God?
2. **WHY** do you think the psalmists had such a hunger for God? What do their songs tell us about their *motives* for wanting to spend time with him?
3. **THINK IT OVER:** Based on how these Psalmists felt about God, it is obvious that they had some strong assumptions about how God *felt* towards them. *What had they assumed?*
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.

QUESTION: Do you think that it is possible to really LOVE someone you FEAR—or someone you do not believe loves you unconditionally? Consider 1 John 4:16-19.

"And so we know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in him. In this way, love is made complete among us so that we will have confidence on the day of judgment, because in this world we are like him.

There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love. We love because he first loved us." (NIV)

Think It Over: What *motivates* the obedience of Christians who always fear God's punishment? Is it love? If not, what is it? _____ Is that good or bad? Why?

I. THE EVANGELICAL "QUIET TIME" — Three Pitfalls To Avoid: (1) Doing "it" because we "have to," (2) Allowing the Quiet Time to become a "new law" that rules over our conscience, (3) Boring God and all the angels who are watching and waiting for something exciting to happen!

A. THINK: UNFORTUNATELY, the "Q.T." has virtually become a law for believers. Many discipleship programs have rules that require you to have a daily devotional time of. . .

BIBLE READING, PRAYER, and some SHARING with another person what you have learned that day. *How could such good things become dangerous to your spiritual health? Here is how: your motive for doing it can become corrupted. Then, if you are faithful you boast (to yourself or others) about your faithfulness, and if you fail, you are filled with a sense of fear or guilt or shame—or all three. In any case, your relationship with God is hurt because you are basing it on your performance, not faith in Christ.*

Further, you may find yourself avoiding God or your fellow Christians for fear that they might discover your unfaithfulness. The cartoon on page one is in (loving) honor of a Ugandan university student, Paul, who was taking SONSHIP. When the class was asked how many had done a "Quiet Time" that day, Paul was the only one who raised his hand. When asked by the leader *hy* he had done his Quiet Time, he answered candidly, "Because I was afraid someone might ask." Paul had done a good thing for a bad reason—the fear of men, the desire to appear holy. (But he's a different person now!)

So, if you are having a regular Quiet Time, of course, don't stop! But it would be wise to examine your motives for doing it. Be honest. Why is this so important to me? It matters because the reason you do it will determine as much as anything else its value to the heart of God—and to your own heart. The devotional writer Oswald Chambers asked this question of those who have cultivated the "habit" of faithfulness in their Quiet Time: "Are you spending time with God, or with your habit?" he asked. God wants your heart, not legalistic conformity to a schedule or program.

WHAT DO YOU THINK? What are the goals for a good devotional time?

1. for the **PRAYER** part, what should my goals be? Is there anything I should avoid? What? Why?
2. for the **BIBLE READING** part, what should my goals be? Is there anything I should avoid? What? Why?
3. If you want to share what you have learned in your devotional time with someone, what should your purpose (for sharing) be? Is there anything you should avoid?

B. THINK ABOUT THESE TRUTHS:

TRUTH 1: My Father wants the focus of my morning devotions to be *fellowship with Him*. I don't need a set "Quiet Time" to get near to him. He is drawing me near to himself—calling me to come near to him. My restless, idolatrous heart needs to be loved by, instructed by, and moved into fellowship with Him *all day*. The Apostle Paul told us to "*pray without ceasing*"—not just from 6:00 to 6:30 a.m. (1 Thess. 5:17)

TRUTH 2: Bible reading and prayer are very important, but they are only a means to an end. Christ is the end. He does not want you ticking off on a list that you have "read the Bible and prayed" as if those actions have now guaranteed his pleasure and blessing for that day. The real criteria for your devotional time is, "*Did I meet with, commune with, fellowship with my 'Abba-Father' this morning?*" Did I cry, "Abba-Father?" (Gal. 4:6 and Rom. 8:16)

- C. Do I "know and rely" on the love He has for me? Am I afraid to talk to my Father openly about some sin that I am struggling with? Do I fear that He will not want to be near me? Does He insist that I get "cleaned up" before I come again? You know, we are all sons of Adam and daughters of Eve, and like our parents, we are allergic to God. We run from Him—the One who wept for Israel to come to Him for shelter under His "outstretched wings." (Lk. 13:34) The English Puritans called their morning time with God "**THE TRANSACTION.**" What is a transaction? It is a "trans-action," that is, a "cross-action" or an exchange in which we feel that we have really crossed the barrier between the

human and the divine. We don't just read verses or say prayers, we seek—and find—the face of God. We "touch" him and he "touches" us. There is an actual relationship—a communing of hearts and minds in which he gets our love and worship, and we receive his love and grace.

Listen to these verses that show the tenderness of God's heart: *"For the LORD's portion is his people 'Jacob' (Israel) his allotted inheritance. In a desert land he found him, in a barren and howling waste. He shielded him and cared for him; he guarded him as the apple of his eye, like an eagle that stirs up its nest and hovers over its young, that spreads its wings to catch them and carries them on its pinions..." — Deut. 32:9-13*

QUICK! READ: APPENDIX D - "Joe and Jesus" by Brennan Manning (p. SAD-1). WOW!

II. IT IS THE GOSPEL THAT DRAWS US INTO DAILY FELLOWSHIP WITH OUR FATHER. (AN EVERY DAY ALL-DAY RELATIONSHIP/PARTNERSHIP)

THE GOOD NEWS IS . . .

THERE IS NO LADDER I

Faith gives you Christ—Instantly. Look! Do you see him there at the Father's right hand? He is interceding for you, assuring that you are acceptable before the Throne. And, beyond that, he is actually "making you beautiful" to the Father!



TO BE NEAR TO GOD, THERE IS NO PERFORMANCE TO GIVE, AND NOTHING ELSE TO DO BUT **BELIEVE THE GOSPEL!**

Believing the Gospel releases the Holy Spirit's presence and energy in your life so that you are empowered to new life and made eager to bear fruit!

— Gal. 3:5; Rom. 7:6

THERE IS NO LADDER TO CLIMB—AT THE TOP OF WHICH IS A DOOR TO FORCE OPEN —ABOVE WHICH YOU MIGHT FIND CHRIST—IF YOU ARE FAITHFUL ENOUGH.

Fig. 3-3

- *The Holy Spirit of Sonship is in you, crying out, "ABBA FATHER!" Listen! Believe! Look!*
- *"He is not far from any one of us, for in Him we live and move and have our being."*
— Acts 17:28
- *God is not only "the God who is there" but "the God who is here!"*

QUESTION: But don't I have to do something to get near to God? Yes. Believe the love he has for you in the Gospel—and act on it by looking at and talking to him. That's all. He is already near to you! He never leaves. He promised, "I am with you always;" "I will never leave you nor forsake you."

QUESTION: But doesn't he forget me at least some of the time? Listen to this: (Isa. 49: 14-16) *"But Zion (God's people Israel) said, 'The LORD has forsaken me, the Lord has forgotten me.' (And God answers...) 'Can a mother forget the baby at her breast and have no compassion on the child she has borne? Though she may forget, I will not forget you! See, I have engraved you on the palms of my hands...!'"* **NOTE:** When a member of the Kamba tribe (Kenya) wants to remember someone's name or other important information, he will "engrave" (scratch) it into the top of his hand with a long thorn—or write it on the palm of his hand with a pen. (The dry, dark skin of the hand shows white letters. Try it!)

A devotional time is nothing more than our faith-response to the fact of God's love for an nearness to us in the Gospel. How should we respond? Paul tells us: we are to cry out "Abba (Daddy) Father!" (Rom. 8:15; Heb. 10:19-22) The power of the Gospel—never

our own worthiness—assures us that we can *boldly* enter the very Holy of Holies because the way in has been opened up by Jesus' blood shed for us. (Heb. 10:19-22) The effect of his being our Great High Priest forever is that his blood "sprinkles the throne of grace" to make us (the impure) pure. Because of that, you and I are God's own sons and daughters and are welcome at his throne anytime. *Just go!*

What? You have sinned? Yes you have. So have I. But. . .

"REJOICE, YOU'RE WORSE THAN YOU THINK!"

Rejoice, because grace runs one way—down hill. The gospel is for sinners, and our biggest sins are the ones we can't even see—the hundreds of subtle ways we fall every hour of every day to love God with our whole heart and our neighbor as we love ourselves. That is why we have to keep going to the Gospel, over and over. We really are big sinners.

A. To BELIEVE THE GOSPEL daily is the key to having a really effective "Q.T."

Otherwise, there is no point in it. We must keep going back to the Gospel everyday to "*re-remember*" that we are loved sons and daughters. Without that, we cannot maintain healthy fellowship with God or truly benefit from the Scriptures. Faith is the key!

WARNING: THE FLESH WILL PULL YOU DOWN! If you are a "professional Christian worker," your temptation will be to study the Word only in preparation for teaching others. But you lay-people may find that on Sunday morning, you need to clean the dust off your Bibles to avoid being embarrassed at church. *Our flesh is allergic to the Bible. Fight it.*

BECAUSE we naturally bend away from God, we need to "keep believing the Gospel" *all through the day.* (We will never do this very well, but that is our goal.) If we don't regularly "bathe" our hearts in the Gospel, they get hard, and the "good news" will begin to sound like "old news"—tired words that fail to ring true amidst the harsh realities of our everyday experience.

B. The AIM of daily devotions, then, is a daily life-changing encounter with the Living God — *not* the legalistic performance of a Christian duty.

C. WHAT DOES THIS DAILY "GOING TO THE GOSPEL" MEAN?

It means that by *faith* in Jesus as your righteousness, you stand before the Father—positionally (legally) and consciously as a son, *and feel the emotion* a loved son should feel. Dr. Jack Miller used to put it this way:



"Our Legal Right . . . leads to Personal Delight" Let's consider that.

Fig. 3-4

1. MY LEGAL RIGHT - Galatians 4:4,5 "*But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law, to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons!*"

What "legal rights" does the gospel give you? (What are the "full rights of sons?")

- a. **Justification** (two parts) 1) the f_____ of our sins and, 2) the gift-right-_____ of Jesus.
- b. **Adoption** (Rom. 8:15-17; Gal. 4:6) I am God's c _____ and therefore his h _____. (Everything the Father has is mine.)
- c. **Sanctification** (Rom. 8:13; 1 Jn. 3:2-3) Growth in Christlikeness by the power of the indwelling _____.

THE HEIDELBERG CATECHISM (1563) — The old Dutch Reformed Catechism is unmatched for its mix of theological accuracy and devotional warmth. ("Catechism" is from the Greek, *katecheo* —to teach or instruct.)

Question 1: *What is your only comfort in life and in death?*

Answer: *That I, with body and soul, both in life and in death, am not my own, but belong to my faithful Savior Jesus Christ, who with His precious blood has fully satisfied (paid in full) for all my sins, and redeemed me from all the power of the devil; and so preserves me that without the will of my Father in heaven, not a hair can fall from my head; indeed, all things must minister to my salvation. Therefore, by His Holy Spirit he also assures me of everlasting life, and makes me willing and ready in heart henceforth to live unto him.*

When by faith I embrace my legal rights as a son, it impacts me emotionally, giving me . . .

2. PERSONAL DELIGHT: Galatians 4:4,7 —

"...because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, 'Abba, Father.' So you are no longer a slave, but a son; and because you are a son, God has made you also an heir."

A son can meet with his Father in the morning, because, as Charles Wesley wrote in 1742 in his hymn, "Arise My Soul, Arise."

My God is reconciled! His pardoning voice I hear.

He owns me for His child! I shall no longer fear.

With confidence I now draw nigh; And "Father—Abba-Father!" cry.

III. YOUR DEVOTIONAL TIME: YOU ARE GOD'S SON/DAUGHTER, SO MEET WITH YOUR FATHER IN THE MORNING!

Viewing your devotional time this way will help you set the tone of your day. You begin the day in the Father's presence, and continue with him so that you live and work IN CONSCIOUS PARTNERSHIP with Him—relying on his strength rather than your own resources.

We often wake up in the morning full of fears. Our day is packed full of demands—what we demand of ourselves, and what others demand of us. Expectations for our performance run high. What are we to do? We have only two choices:

A. We can "Orphan Out"—always a real possibility. This can take two forms.

1. We live half-heartedly without caring about God or others and squander our lives on ourselves and our own desires. Or,

2. We can get out of bed feeling anxious and full of worry, and rush into the business of the day — alone. (see Jack Miller's article "THE FLESH" on p. S9-10)

B. We can live in "partnership" with God. (*koinonia* - κοινωνία)

George Mueller (1805-1898), the English Lutheran pastor was a missionary to the Jews and caretaker for thousands of orphans in London. The amounts of money to provide for so many children were staggering, but Mueller saw his life as a "partnership" with his Father. Daily he put his weak little hand in his Father's big strong hand, and saw the needs of that ministry abundantly supplied. For all of the fame that his ministerial exploits earned him, he was a selfless and God-reliant man. It was this living in daily partnership with the

Father that enabled him to stay that way. He wrote, as you may remember from S-1,

***"The day came when I had to die to George Mueller
and what people thought of me."***

When you read Mueller's biography you are struck with the thousands of seemingly insurmountable obstacles that plagued his ministry. Problems came daily—in torrents. But since Mueller was only the "Junior Partner" and God was the "Senior Partner," any problems were God's problems. (See the story of "*Seleshi and Fekadu*" in "NOTES ON PRAYER," p. 3-12.)

This was not some sort of "mind game" with Mueller, it was faith in the reality that this world is under the absolute control of the Sovereign God. The Father wants us to live and minister this way as well. If you protest that it is too hard, you misunderstand.

It is not hard, it is easy. The hard part is getting out of God's way—taking our self-willed hands off the steering wheel and letting God drive. And, doing that is precisely the purpose of meeting with your Father in the morning. It is a daily reminder that we cannot—nor should we be able to—make life work on our own.

Our Father wants us to get up in the morning and have him be among our first conscious thoughts—*"Abba. Good morning. It's me. Here I am, ready for another day with you."* You see, we can begin our fellowship with him right away. We don't have to wait until some set time later in the morning.

But at some point in the day (and the earlier the better, since neither the world, the flesh nor the devil wait to press their demands on us) we need to "seek his face" (Ps. 27:8), get our marching orders from him, and then walk through the day with Him in the lead—directing, guiding and empowering us by his Spirit.

IV. FAITH ACTIONS: WHAT TO DO WHEN YOU MEET WITH YOUR FATHER!

IMPORTANT! We flatly refuse to give you a series of "steps" or make laws for you! You are a free son/daughter! But, if you find these suggestions helpful, good. Use some or all of them, but experiment! Find what works for you, then, *meet with your Father—not your method!*

YOU ARE NOW ABOUT TO EMBARK ON THE MOST DIFFICULT ACTION OF YOUR LIFE!

As you spend time with your Father, he wants to be constantly moving you from being self-centered towards being God-centered. Sadly, you will resist this. Count on it.

- A. **Love your Father back!** (That is the *first* thing He wants, Matt. 22:37) Look at Him with your "eyes of faith!" "Seek His face!" He is very busy right now—loving you—waiting for you to meet with him.

Don't be afraid. He loves you. You cannot love God if you are afraid of him. Why not? Remember 1 John 4:16-19 —

"And so we know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in him. 17 In this way, love is made complete among us so that we will have confidence on the day of judgment, because in this world we are like him. 18 There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love. 19 We love because he first loved us." — 1 John 4:16-19

- B. Do a "REALITY CHECK."** What is it? It is asking — and answering — three very simple questions with Gospel answers.

"REALITY CHECK"

- 1. Where is the FATHER — right now?** (Ps. 11:4) What is he doing? How does he feel towards you?
- 2. Where is the SON — right now?** (Heb. 8:1) What is He doing? (Rom. 8:34; Heb. 7:25)
- 3. Where is the SPIRIT — right now?** (Gal. 4:6a) What is He doing? (Gal. 4:6b; Rom. 8:16, 26ff)

Beginning the day with a "REALITY CHECK" is nothing fancy. It is just simple faith laying hold of the love of God for you in the Gospel. ("The Transaction")

If you feel there is a "wall" between you and God, **repent**. And, if you don't want to repent, or don't know what to repent of—**tell Him that!** Be honest about who you are and how you feel. (Trying to hide is useless anyway.) Cry out for the Spirit to make the Father "at home" in your heart. Then, you will "pray in the Spirit"—that is, be consciously in touch with God, and be helped to pray by the Spirit, (Rom. 8:26).¹

- C. Tell Him about your cares and fears for the day—the things that may rob you of his peace and joy.** Lay it all out before him. He is your Abba. He is concerned about the things that concern you because you are His child. Entrust them to him. He will either:

- 1. CHANGE THE SITUATION** (or person) you pray about — or, . . .
- 2. GIVE YOU THE STRENGTH,** wisdom, power and direction to change the situation, or, . . .
- 3. LEAVE THE SITUATION LIKE IT IS** and change you — and give you His love and grace to sustain you in the midst of it. He may be saying "Yes," "No" (2 Cor. 12), or "Wait"—but he always answers!

- D. Rest in his promises of love for you! Move from fear to faith!**

"And so we know and rely on the love God has for us." - 1 John 4:16a *Knowing and relying* on the love of God are different actions. Knowing is more mental. God is love. Relying is leaning on and resting in God's love. God loves me. The results of knowing and relying are different. One gives doctrinal correctness, the other in peace of mind, rest, and fellowship.

Commit the day & each of its activities to Him! This is a good time to check your pocket calendar to be sure that you don't miss a scheduled appointment or activity.

NOTE: The phrase "Pray in the Spirit" used in Eph. 6:18 and Jude vs. 21 cannot possibly mean praying in tongues. Why? Because Paul commanded: "Pray always in the Spirit" (Eph. 6:18) but in 1 Cor. 14:14,15 he says that when he prayed with his mind it was more fruitful than praying "with his (not in the) Spirit." Thus the view that "praying in the Spirit" (which we should always do), means praying in tongues is obviously false. And there is a second reason. Paul, in teaching about the variety of spiritual gifts, clearly says that everyone does not have every gift—specifically mentioning tongues. (1 Cor. 12:29-31). Beware of teaching that insists that you must have any of the gifts to be "spiritual." God is the sovereign gift-giver, and his Spirit "gives them to each one, just as he determines" (1 Cor. 12:11).

E. Now talk to your Father about anything and anybody the Holy Spirit lays on your heart. Is the memory of someone "poisoning" your heart & your fellowship with the Father? Pray through it. (If someone has wronged you, "get in the sinner's place" yourself so you can see that at that very moment you are being forgiven! Perspective!)

F. Read some Scripture to see what your Father wants to say to you. If you have a specific need, "eat" where you know the food is. If you need a spiritual sweet one day, eat it. If you need *nyama choma* or *njera* or *ugali* on another day, eat it! Get a balanced diet.

Otherwise, try to read through a book—slowly—using just a paragraph or so each day. "Suck" on the Word like it was a candy "sweet" in your mouth. Mmmm. David was right, *it is sweeter than honey from the honeycomb!* (If it should taste bitter some day, tell the Father and ask the Spirit to show you the problem so that you can repent.)

G. Don't tell God "Good bye" when your "Q.T." is over. You have just begun your day's walk! You have just put your weak little hand into your Father's Big Strong Hand. Now, walk out the door the same way. *Don't let go!* He wants to "partner" with you through the day. He wants to be with you as you do all those things you have discussed with Him. In that conscious walk with him, you will be able to manifest the fruit of the Holy Spirit (Gal. 5:22 - LJPPKGFGS) in the changing scenes of the drama of your day—*be it a comedy or tragedy!*

H. Then, when you lie down to sleep, tell your Father "goodnight" and feel his embrace in the Gospel. He'll be watching over you through the night, his eyes always on you, ready to meet you when you wake in the morning—ready to spend another day in partnership with you.

NOW ... have you got hold of that? Has that got hold of you?

GRACE ASSIGNMENTS:

1. Read: "Joe and Jesus" — article by Brennan Manning (p. SAD-1)
2. Read: *Notes on Prayer* — article by Jack Miller (p. S3-11ff)
3. Scripture Memory: Gal. 4:4-7



NOTES ON PRAYER

by Dr. C. John Miller — A Devotional Reading

Edited for SONSHIP for Africa



FIG. 3-5

I. INTRODUCTION

THESIS: *It should be the desire of every Christian to be a "reproducer," that is, one who shares his life in Christ with others, and who promotes faith in Jesus—believers and unbelievers—by his testimony and example.*

A. To do this is to fulfill the most fundamental calling given to us by Jesus in Matthew 28. There He instructs His followers to "go and make disciples of all nations." This goal—discipling the nations—is an awesome goal! In fact, . .

1. It means nothing less than asking all men to give up their self-will and to turn, instead, to utter dependence upon God for salvation from sin and its punishment (death), for life and all things pertaining to life.

2. It means being God-centered through Christ Jesus instead of self-centered.

B. Now, this task, if understood properly, will inevitably create a tension in us as we try to carry it out! It creates a tension because at our very root, we the disciplinakers are still selfish, self-centered, self-willed people! Deep down in our hearts, we are still nursing our own ambitions, our own expectations for ourselves and others, and, we have a tendency to try to control everything and everybody around us so that those ambitions are fulfilled (our "god-ness").

1. Worse, we believe we have the right to hold on to grudges against others for the hurts done to us. We may have nurtured and cultivated those grudges through years of careful devotion to our wounds. In short, we are self-centered disciplers.

2. If, then, we are ever to be able to effectively speak to others about giving up their self-will in order to become disciples of Jesus, we must, as Jesus exhorts us, first remove the beams from our own eyes. We must be growing in being God-centered ourselves—desiring his will and seeking after his way of accomplishing that will. This means we must become increasingly self-forgetful in any case, we will always be duplicating who we truly are in the lives of those we teach and disciple. Our person is just as important as our message (Paul in 1 Cor. 11:1).

C. How can we be changed? By believing prayer—conversation with God in the context of who we are to him in Christ (sons and daughters) is an essential means appointed by God for this radical transformation. This is the most effective weapon of spiritual warfare God offers us.

He has given us prayer (conversation with him) to bring us into partnership with him to accomplish his purposes in our life and in the lives of others—all for his glory and praise!

1. In the act of "believing prayer," we begin to lose our self-will, and become God-centered!

2. Believing prayer gives us power to do God's will in God's way. It enables us to identify with God's will, submit to it—and dare others to commit themselves to it. As the

Kingdom of Self is broken down, the Kingdom of God is lifted up! Prayer is the heart of Kingdom Power! Now, if all of this sounds very hard or even frightening), consider:

II. HOW CAN WE BEGIN TO PRAY IN THIS WAY?

Obviously if God-centered kingdom praying is important, then praying this way, and teaching others to pray this way, is critical for a healthy Christian life—not to mention for the coming of the Kingdom itself (viz. Matthew 6:10 “Thy Kingdom come...”)

The following two FAITH ACTIONS outline the most essential elements of prayer. We call them “faith actions” since they are not really steps, *per se*, but very natural ways of relating to God by faith. As you read them—if you believe they are biblical and worth the effort, memorize them. Meditate on them and the Scriptures from which they are gleaned. But, most importantly—practice them! Practice them daily. If possible, practice them at a set time each day—preferably in the morning before the demands of each day’s work flood your mind and heart with business. Then, recall throughout the day what you agreed with the Father about!

Practicing these FAITH ACTIONS with *understanding* will stimulate our faith which invites the Spirit to bless us with “the power which is for us who believe—that power which is like the mighty working of God’s strength which he exerted in Christ Jesus when he raised him from the dead!”

A. FAITH ACTION ONE: PRAY AS A SON OR DAUGHTER OF THE KING!

1. We are told:

But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons. Because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, “Abba-Father.” So you are no longer a slave, but a son; and since you are a son, God has also made you an heir. – Galatians 4:4-7 (NIV)

2. It is critical to recognize, right at the beginning of prayer, that we are there for fellowship with God. We are His sons or daughters—coming to communicate with our Father God—to enjoy him, greet him, salute him, worship him, and adore him.

a. We make a terrible mistake when we rush off into other areas of prayer before this foundational fact becomes a heart-reality in our meeting with him!

b. There will be times when this fellowship registers itself in us in exceptional and very experiential ways. It is safe to say that you might *feel* or *sense* God’s presence as you bow your heart to him and begin to praise him—review the way he called you to faith in him—give thanks for the provisions he had made—and especially as you consider the Cross of Jesus—and his presence at the right hand of the Father which forever guarantees your warm welcome there!

c. On the other hand, there will be times when no sensation of God’s presence is experienced. Don’t fret over this or struggle to feel something. Count on the truth of God’s own words: When you cry out in the name of Jesus, you are in God’s presence—whether you feel like it or not! Jesus promises us in John 14:23,

“If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him.” (NIV)

3. In either of those two cases (or anywhere in between), it is your privilege to come before the King of Kings and Lord of Lords—to enjoy communion with our Father in

Heaven who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ Jesus, who has chosen us before the creation of the world, predestined us to be adopted as His sons, redeemed us, and revealed great things to us—all to the praise of his glorious grace! (Eph. 1) His grace to you is glorious and lavish! Enjoy It!

B. FAITH ACTION TWO: PRAY AGAINST THOSE THINGS WHICH HINDER YOUR FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD THROUGHOUT THE DAY!

That comes down to confessing our sins to God since our sins hinder our fellowship with Him! But, there is one particular sin which is kind of generic and which deserves some special attention. It is perhaps the number one hindrance to fellowship with God — **ANXIETY.**

"For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, 'Abba-Father.'" (NIV) – Rom. 8:15

1. **Why is anxiety so terrible?** Because: It reveals our self-centeredness. It makes plain that the kingdom of self is raging and reigning. Anxiety does this since it reveals that we have ambitions, loves, desires, dreams, demands, expectations, etc. which we are keeping for ourselves. "God, are you listening? I have my rights!" Anxiety shows a deep lack of faith in God's ability to provide for us as He has promised.

Anxiety focuses on self instead of God—on our need to control our life situations instead of submitting our control to a loving Father's providence. That doesn't mean that we "go to sleep," become lazy or do nothing. It does mean that we don't let our circumstances blot out the knowledge that our Father who loves us is in complete control of the situation—no matter how grim things appear.

2. **NOW, the BEST WAY to eliminate anxiety—this major stumbling block to your fellowship with God and your ability to serve him fruitfully—is to:**

a. **Examine your heart to determine what your ambitions are and how you have been trying to accomplish them.** If they are not really the Lord's, or, if you have been using fleshly tactics to try to accomplish God's ways, then *repent!* No matter how good your purposes are, if the fruit of the Spirit does not characterize how you carry out those plans, God will not be in them! The work will have your fingerprints—not God's—all over it.

b. **Let God mold your person and your priorities in his presence.** Listen to what he wants to tell you about yourself, and what He wants you to do. Rest in him.

c. **Now, pray for success—in both areas!** When your desires are God's desires, both for your own character development as a son or daughter (the fruit of the Spirit), and, when you have a strong sense of what He wants you to do in the way of Kingdom building, then your prayer becomes Kingdom-centered, God-centered prayer. God is really not interested in other kinds!

3. **NOW, you can live and work as a Junior Partner with God as your Senior Partner!** (A nice place to be, don't you think? Now, your "worries" have become his worries!)

THE CLEVER ETHIOPIAN: A STORY Seleshi and Fekadu met on University Drive in Addis Ababa. Seleshi noticed that Fekadu (who always used to look worried) looked incredibly peaceful! Amazed, Seleshi asked, "Fekadu! You look so peaceful, but the last time we met, you had so many worries you looked ready to give up and die! What happened?"

Fekadu answered, "Well, in fact, I met this man named Mesfin, and I have hired him for 5,000 birr¹ a week to do all of my worrying for me!" Seleshi was shocked. He asked Fekadu, "WHAT? 5,000 birr a week? Where will you get that much money?" "I have no idea," Fekadu answered. "That's his worry."

4. With our hearts trusting in our "Senior Partner" to make us into *his* person and lead us to carry out *his* plans, anxiety, this awful stumbling block to our fellowship and effectiveness is removed. Now 1 Thess. 5:17 doesn't seem so absurd! *"Pray continually!"*

CONCLUSION

As a part of the SONSHIP course, we like for you to *rename* your "Quiet Time" or "Morning Devotions" to "meeting with my Father." Why? It helps you remember that the *purpose* of your meeting with God is not to give you a good conscience because you met some goal, or to help you feel good about yourself because you went through a set routine. *The purpose is to meet with your Father.*

Later on we will add to and enrich your morning time by looking at the "warfare" aspects of prayer—for renewal in the church and for the advancement of the Kingdom through bold evangelism.² But for now, our primary focus is on *fellowship*. An intimate fellowship with the Father is *the foundation* for anything and everything that might follow—and His heart's desire for us. Neither church renewal that is worthy of the name, nor effective evangelism will be born apart from intimacy and partnership with the God. *Get into God's presence and stay there until you have done business together!*

ARE YOU READY? LET'S GO PRACTICE!

GRACE ACTIVITIES:

1. Prayer Workshop: Small Groups - S3-15
2. Prayer Goal Worksheet - S3-16

¹ The *birr* is the Ethiopian unit of currency. ² See also S16-10, "Warfare Praying!" by John Piper

PRAYER WORKSHOP

Small Groups

INSTRUCTIONS

1. **DIVIDE UP INTO SMALL GROUPS OF SIX OR LESS** and for 15 minutes, fill in your PRAYER GOAL WORK SHEET. (S3-16) The group should discuss the ideas on the WORKSHEET.
2. **AFTER your sheet is completed**, find a place where you can spend 15 minutes *alone* with your Father. Here are some things you might do when you are with him:
 - a. **Meditate** on the cross of Christ and the perfect righteousness that his life, death, and resurrection assure for you. Think on his **present intercession** for you before the Father! Think on the **position** you have before the Father—complete acceptance as his son or daughter! *This is the foundation of prayer!* (Use Gal. 4:4-7, Rom. 8:12-17, Heb. 7:25, and Phil. 3:7-11 to fuel your meditation! Talk to the Father as the loved son/daughter you are!)
 - b. **Ask the Holy Spirit to help you see your sins and confess them.** (Think especially in terms of your thought-life and the lack of love that may showing itself in difficult relationships with others.)
 - c. **Talk to him about your desire to bring him glory and honor through your life by understanding the Gospel more deeply and loving him and others more completely.** (especially those closest to you, and unbelievers)
3. **AFTER the 20 minutes is up**, return to your group and **share something** about your time with the Father. You can share anything — good, bad, fulfilling or frustrating.
4. **CLOSE the Session** with one or two people praying for growth in everyone's fellowship with God.

MY PRAYER GOAL WORKSHEET

MY NAME _____

MY PURPOSES

1. To learn to love, worship, enjoy and glorify my Heavenly Father through daily fellowship with him.
2. To learn to live and serve in partnership with my Father—instead of trying to live life and serve him in my own wisdom and by my own strength.

Does God want to meet with me every day? Why? When?

Will God be angry at me and reject me if I don't meet my goal?

DETERMINING MY SPECIFIC GOAL — My plan for seeking daily fellowship with my Heavenly Father: I need to keep in close touch with Him, feed on His word, talk to Him about my needs, and pray for other people—tribes and nations—that the Kingdom may come in their lives as well. Do I want to set aside a specific time in the morning before the battle starts? Lunch time? In the evening?

My goal is to: _____

REMEMBER: Build a relationship—not a ladder!

THE MAIN OBSTACLES TO THE GOAL I HAVE SET ARE:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

THE SPECIFIC STANDARDS I WANT TO MAINTAIN AS CONSISTENTLY AS POSSIBLE:

(Think of your *heart-activity* — not just the physical act of praying, reading, etc.
Think *RELATIONSHIP*)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.



Fig. 3-6



PART TWO: JUSTIFICATION AND SONSHIP

The Sinfulness of Sin & The Source of Righteousness

§4 - Law, Legalism & The Gospel at War

§5 - Understanding the Sinfulness of Sin

§6 - Active vs. Passive Righteousness



Fig. 4-1

LAW, LEGALISM AND THE GOSPEL AT WAR!

QUESTION 1: What do Law, Legalism & The Gospel Have In Common?

ANSWER: Each Speaks to Two of Mankind's Most Critical Concerns:

A. ALL THREE have as their primary concern, man's quest for acceptance with God.

Psalm 24:3-4 Who may ascend the hill of the LORD? Who may stand in his holy place? (King David)

Mark 10:17 "Sir, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" ("The Rich Young Ruler")

B. ALL THREE offer a way for sinful men to stand righteous in the presence of a Holy God.

We instinctively know that God is Holy and that we must become holy to be allowed into His presence.

Psalm 24:3-4 "Who may ascend the hill of the LORD? He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not lift up his soul to an idol..."

HOWEVER... There Are Fundamental Differences in the Answers These Three Give.

Although Law, Legalism and the Gospel are all concerned with how we can attain moral perfection...

A. THE LAW DEMANDS perfection.

Deuteronomy 30:16-19 For I command you today to love the LORD your God, to walk in his ways, and to keep his commands, decrees and laws; then you will live and increase, and the LORD your God will bless you in the land you are entering to possess. But if your heart turns away and you are not obedient, and if you are drawn away to bow down to other gods and worship them, I declare to you this day that you will certainly be destroyed. You will not live long in the land you are crossing the Jordan to enter and possess. This day I call heaven and earth as witnesses against you that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life, so that you and your children may live.

B. LEGALISM IMAGINES perfection.

In practice, "Christian Pharisaism" ignores your heart and your thought-life.

Matthew 5:27-28 You have heard that it was said, 'Do not commit adultery.' But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart.

C. THE GOSPEL . . . PROVIDES perfection.

Romans 3:21-24 But now a righteousness from God, apart from law, has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.

QUESTION 2: How Else Do These Three Methodologies Differ?

ANSWER: They Differ Radically and Completely! See the chart on the next page. ■■■➡

LAW

The Old Covenant - Mosaic Law

A. THE LAW'S CENTRAL PROMISE

1. Life upon the condition of perfect obedience
"Do this and live!" - Deut. 21:1ff; Lev. 18:4,5; etc.
2. Death for disobedience - Gen. 2:17; Rom. 6:23.

B. THE LAW PROVIDES NO REAL SUBSTITUTE

Sins "go on your Barclay's Card" and debt accumulates until a just payment is made. (Heb. 9:15)
Heb. 10:1-4 "For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sin." So, the same ineffectual sacrifices were offered "year after year!"

C. THE LAW'S EFFECT ON THE CONSCIENCE

1. Slavery to an impossible standard. Gal. 4:31
2. It brings guilt and a curse. Gal. 3:10
3. It "tells" the failing lawkeeper. The Law was given to drive him in despair to Christ! (Gal. 3:24)

D. THE IMPLICATIONS FOR THOSE WHO SEEK RIGHTEOUSNESS BEFORE GOD BY LAW

1. They are under a curse. Gal. 3:10
2. They become self-deceived boasters who point to and trust in their own achievements. e.g. the Pharisees - John 5:41,42-44 and Matt. 23:1ff, "Everything they do is done for men to see."
3. SO, as a result, they may feel GUILTY and condemned since they are trying to live up to an impossible standard—perfect love for God and man. (Matt. 22:37-39; Phil. 2:3, "Esteem others...")
4. OR, they may feel PROUD of themselves and look down on others. They are self-deceived, and believe that they really do keep the law.

LEGALISM

CHRISTIANS "Living Under Law"

A. LEGALISM'S CENTRAL PROMISE

"You can sanctify yourself." This sounds like good news, but, Paul warns that it is "another gospel," a deadly heresy that puts men back under the curse of the law. (Gal. 1:6ff; 2:14,21)

B. LEGALISM LOOKS FOR NO SUBSTITUTE

Christian Legalism gives you Jesus merits at conversion, but thereafter, you must maintain your ongoing acceptance with God (not salvation) by striving for holiness and kingdom works. Your eyes are focused on your own works and righteousness.

C. LEGALISM'S EFFECT ON THE CONSCIENCE

You become either proud and self-satisfied, or depressed and anxious—depending on how well you feel you are performing. You are a slave to your feelings and to the opinions of others.

D. THE IMPLICATIONS FOR CHRISTIANS WHO RETURN TO THE LAW AS THE BASIS FOR THEIR ONGOING ACCEPTANCE WITH GOD

1. You "fall from grace" (as your operating principle) so "Christ is of no value" to you. Gal. 3:1ff; 5:1ff.
2. You think and act like an orphan (Jn. 14:18), not a son (Rom. 8:15). i.e. "It's all up to me!"
3. You compare yourself with others and strive to maintain and enhance the fragile illusion of being righteous on your own. Gal. 5:14,15
4. Legalists are satisfied with an outward conformity to the Law and fear looking at their hearts. They have a shallow view of sin, and therefore of the love of God and the power of the cross of Christ.

✠ THE GOSPEL ✠

Living Under the Grace of God

A. THE GOSPEL'S CENTRAL PROMISE

1. Christ has already done the work! Gal. 3:10-14
— NO CURSE! Gal. 2:20. Justification by FAITH!
2. I have peace with God. Rom. 5:1; Heb. 10:22
3. I have the full rights of a son. Gal. 4:4-6; Rom. 8:15

B. THE GOSPEL PROVIDES MY SUBSTITUTE

2 Cor. 5:21 "God made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us that we might become the righteousness of God in Him!" Gospel: "Satisfaction through propitiation" Isa. 53:6 & 1 Pet. 2:21 "...but the LORD has laid on Him, the iniquity of us all!" Rom. 1:16-17; 3:21; Phil. 3:8,9.

C. THE GOSPEL'S EFFECT ON MY CONSCIENCE

1. My Conscience is Cleansed from Dead Works. Heb. 9:11-14; 10:22! 1 Tim. 1:3-5, 18,19; 3:9.
2. "...The righteous requirements of the law (are) fully met in us who walk after the Spirit..." Rom. 3:1; 8:3f

D. THE IMPLICATIONS OF GRACE FOR MY LIFE

1. I am loved, accepted, righteous! "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness!" (Rom. 10:4) I have no need to boast or live for the praise of men!
2. The Holy Spirit Empowers me to live a life of love as I walk in dependence on Him instead of my own effort. Gal. 5:16ff; Eph. 5:2; Col. 2:6,7
3. Because I walk in God's ongoing forgiveness, I am enabled to love and forgive others. "...the only thing that counts is faith working through love." Gal. 5:6 (HEALED RELATIONSHIPS)
5. Ezekiel 36:26 is fulfilled! God gets great GLORY from my new life! I am no longer a slave, but a son who cries, "Abba-Father!" (Rom. 8:15)

SOLVING THE MYSTERY: WHAT IS TRUE HOLINESS?

LEVEL I

EXTERNAL OBEDIENCE NOT SINNING OUTWARDLY

The Law of Moses (MAJORED ON "DON'TS")

IT WAS SAID IN OLD TIME . . .

DON'T WORSHIP AN IDOL, DON'T WORK ON THE SABBATH DAY, DON'T KILL, DON'T COMMIT ADULTERY, DON'T STEAL, DON'T LIE, DON'T, DON'T, DON'T...

SO, WE THINK: "Today I didn't kill anybody or rob a bank or sleep with anyone else's wife or get drunk or tell a lie, or... Therefore I have done well; I am holy; truly, I have kept the law!"

THE TRUTH: That's a good start, but the Pharisees did that, and they were just "SIN MANAGERS!" We may look good on the outside (so does a rotten egg), but if our hearts are corrupt and out of fellowship with God, we haven't begun to "keep the law."

People "obey law" for all sorts of reasons—fear of punishment, a desire to impress others, etc. rather than because they love God and others.

The Pharisees "kept the Law" externally and then congratulated themselves for being righteous. But when Jesus looked into their hearts he said, "Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You clean the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence.... Woe to you.... you hypocrites! You are like whitewashed tombs which look beautiful on the outside but on the inside are full of dead men's bones and everything unclean. In the same way, on the outside you appear to people as righteous but on the inside you are full of hypocrisy and wickedness." — Matthew 23:25-28

SOULAW.L.V.P.

LEVEL II

INTERNAL - HEART PURITY THE HEART / THOUGHT / MOTIVE LEVEL

The Sermon on the Mount (THE HEART)

BUT I SAY UNTO YOU . . .

DON'T LOVE THE WORLD; DON'T HATE OR DESPISE PEOPLE IN YOUR HEART; DON'T COVET; DON'T LUST; DON'T FAST AND PRAY TO BE SEEN BY MEN, ETC.

SO, WE THINK: "My heart is perfectly pure! Today, I didn't hate anyone, covet anyone's possessions, think vain thoughts, or even have lust in my heart! Truly, I have kept the Law!"

THE TRUTH: Don't congratulate yourself yet! Yes, if you have a pure heart, you're a giant step ahead of the Pharisees, but even so, you have not yet even begun to keep the law! Why? Because:

1. Holiness is much more than performing at Levels I and II/ (outward obedience and inward purity) True holiness involves moving from the self-centeredness and self-love our flesh loves to a radically new way of thinking and acting.

2. True holiness is loving God and others. We can keep all the commandments and maintain pure hearts, but we haven't yet "kept the law" because we haven't loved anybody yet! We talk a lot about "holiness," and "keeping the law," but this is the Law: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, strength and mind—and love your neighbor as yourself." (Deut. 6:5; Lev. 19:18; Matt. 22:36ff) Do you do that? I see. Not too well. But love is a VERB—positive action! Godliness is not just "What should I avoid?" but, "How can I love?" Jesus calls us to live at Level III, the "New Law."

LEVEL III

LOVE IN ACTION FAITH EXPRESSED THROUGH LOVE

The "NEW LAW" — Loving as Jesus Loved Us

"A NEW COMMANDMENT I GIVE UNTO YOU, love one another as I have loved you." (Jn. 13:34f) *"This is how we know what love is: Jesus laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers."* (1 Jn. 3:16) The new standard is Jesus love for us—not our love for ourselves!

SO, WE THINK: "Oh, now I understand! If must try really hard to love God and love my neighbor. If I can succeed, then I will be a true lawkeeper!" No, wrong focus! God wants us to love, not keep laws. SEE: Gal. 5:6,13, 14!

THE TRUTH: God doesn't want us focusing on the law. "You are not under law!" Yes, we are to keep the law, but by looking at Jesus, not at the law. "Live by, be led by, walk in, keep in step with, and be controlled by" the Holy Spirit. His fruit is love! (Rom. 6:14)

Men: Holiness is not just avoiding lust; it is serving our sisters with pure hearts!

Women: Holiness is not just avoiding covetousness, but sharing what God has given us! 1 Jn. 3:17 (ref. the Eph. 4:28 principle: "Stop stealing; start working and giving!")

As we believe the Gospel, we keep getting the Spirit. As we live by the Spirit we love, and when we love, we keep the whole law!" (Gal. 3:1f; Rom. 13:8-10) Love is our new heart in action—empowered by the Spirit to share the Gospel, reach out to, bind up, build up, bless, and edify others so that great glory goes to the Father! (Matt. 5:16) Anything less is not biblical holiness!

JESUS did not come to earth, die on a cross, rise from the dead, and send the Spirit to make us into "I don't" people, but into self-sacrificing lovers of people like he was! SPECIFICALLY, how does this love look? ➡

"THE LOOK OF LOVE" ✧ AUTHENTIC CHRISTLIKENESS ✧

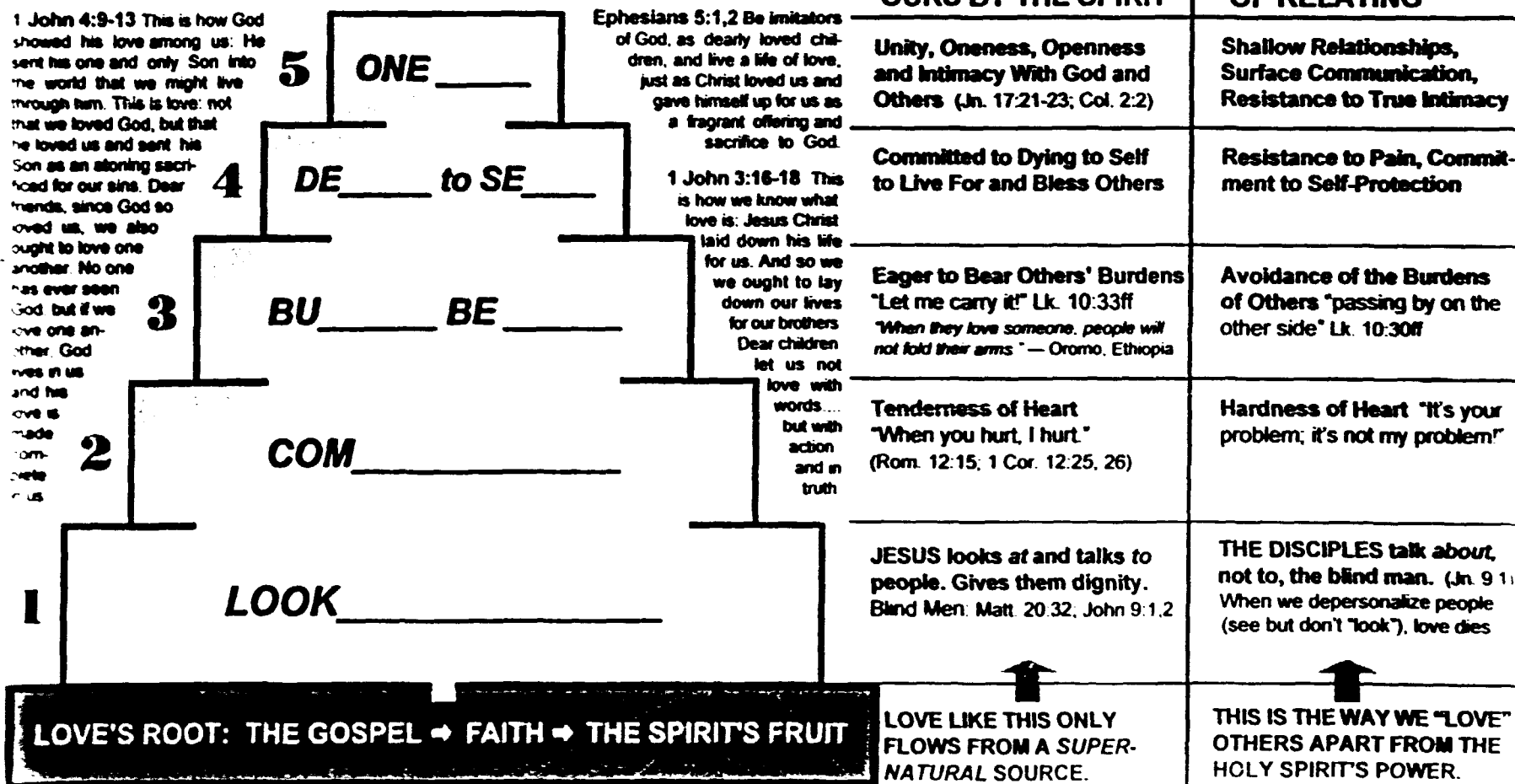
In Order to BE LIKE JESUS, We Must LOVE LIKE JESUS!

THIS DIAGRAM pictures the flow of Jesus' love in five stages. His love for people was redemptive; ours is not. But, as we live in reliance on the Holy Spirit, we will "imitate God" by loving others in Jesus-like ways.

1 John 4:9-13 This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God, but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us.

Ephesians 5:1,2 Be imitators of God, as dearly loved children, and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

1 John 3:16-18 This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And so we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers. Dear children, let us not love with words... but with action and in truth.



LAW, LEGALISM & THE GOSPEL

Discussion & Workshop

Please use the reverse side of this page if you need more space for your answers.

1. What is your reaction to the idea that "Christian Legalism" is essentially a denial of the core of the Gospel?
 - a. Please state what you think is wrong with legalism—if anything.
 - b. Is your own faith, your local church or your denomination affected by this teaching? If so, how?
2. Comment on the threefold comparison between LAW, LEGALISM and the GOSPEL on page S4-3. Did anything here strike you as especially significant or helpful? If so, what?
3. Examine carefully the chart on page S4-4, "SOLVING THE MYSTERY: "WHAT IS TRUE HOLINESS?"

Please evaluate at which of the THREE LEVELS you have been concentrating in your Christian walk thus far? Which LEVEL?

 - a. Circle which LEVEL: I II III
 - b. If you circled level I or II, comment briefly on what the effect of this has been on:
 - 1) the *completeness* of your obedience to God, and...
 - 2) the *quality* of your relationships to God and others.
4. How do you reconcile the New Testament's demand for obedience with Paul's statement that we are "not under law" in Galatians 5:18? (p. S4-4, LEVEL III)
5. If you were to sum up all the Law of God in one simple phrase that does justice to the whole of the Law, what would it be?
6. What is your reaction to "THE LOOK OF LOVE - AUTHENTIC CHRISTLIKENESS" chart on p. S4-5?

Please comment on how it impacted you: (Were you confused, convicted, troubled or frightened by this information and its implications for your life? Specifically how?)

 - a. Intellectually -
 - b. emotionally -

Understanding the Sinfulness of Sin

*Sin: Merely Breaking Rules
or
Failing to Love?*

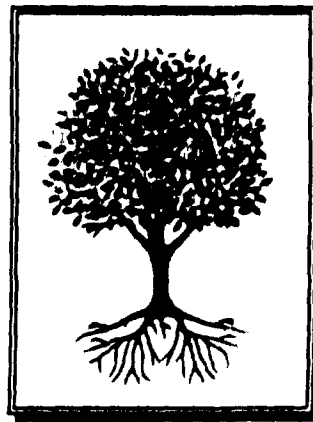


Fig. 5-1

THE SINFULNESS OF SIN

Sin, Law and the Gospel in the Daily Life of the Christian

by John W. Long, Jr.



"But now by dying to what once bound us, we have been released from the law so that we serve in the new way of the Spirit, and not in the old way of the written code." – Romans 7:6

IN THIS LESSON we will be dealing with the rather embarrassing subject of particular sins in the church. Most of us find it more comfortable to talk about sin in general than specific sins in particular, especially if they happen to be ours! But even a cursory reading of the Bible shows that God is infinitely more concerned about his honor than protecting his people from shame by having their sins exposed. Both Testaments are veritable catalogues of the sins of God's people—shocking sins: idol worship, adultery, incest, and child sacrifice to Molech, to name a few.

As of early 1998, in the course of writing, testing and teaching *SONSHIP* for Africa, we have worked with hundreds of students and professional Christian workers from twenty countries around the continent—from Sierra Leone to Lesotho to Ethiopia and in-between. Each time we study "The Three Levels of the Law" (S-4), we pose this question:

We have strayed so far from the Biblical definition of holiness, that Jesus' teaching about love sounds heretical!

"Are the Ten Commandments kept, even outwardly, in your congregation, denomination or on your campus?"

Without fail, the answer has been an emphatic, "No!" To clarify, we follow up with: "Do you mean that Christians are lying, stealing and committing adultery?" Invariably, the answer has been a very sad, "Yes." Remember, these are pastors, lay-leaders, university professors and students, and seminary professors and students. They know.

Of course Americans, European, Latin and Oriental Christians would have to answer the question the same way. We in Africa are not unique. If there is any difference in "us" and "them," it is that they tend to hide their sin, whereas one of our favorite pastimes in Kenya is to air our church fights in the public media.

You and I are in pursuit of the glory of God through the purity of the Bride of Christ. Having arrived at the subject of sin, if we are serious about this quest, we will not spare ourselves. The Sinfulness of Sin workshop in this lesson, will have us probing the Christian psyche in search of the external and internal factors that motivate us to commit particular sins. As we do, we will not move through the forest like cats and talk about how "some men are not very kind to their wives." We will move like elephants and have one of our small groups analyze wife beating and report back to the large group their views as to why some men do it. Then we will evaluate how the Law and the Gospel propose to deal with that and other, surface sins. We will speak openly about

sin because it matters. Our sin robs God of his glory and honor.

But don't be afraid! Our purpose is not to expose the sins of anyone—except to himself. If we your leaders choose to publicly repent of their sins to model re-

pentance for you, that is their business. Your sins are between you and God. Our purpose is to bless everyone, not shame anyone. But, in order to bless, we will need to provide the Holy Spirit with useful tools to expose the roots of our sins—sins that may have lain buried, unrecognized and unrepented of for years. Yes, you are quite right. This is scary business. Dying to oneself always is. We admit that the price of an investigation is high, but the glory of God among the nations is at stake! So may the Holy Spirit strengthen us to pay whatever price is necessary. Let's join Paul and be "crucified with Christ" (Gal. 2:20). If we do, we will not die, but live, and so will those who hear us.

Why does sin flourish in the church? Why are the most shocking sins so easily found in believing communities worldwide? The easy answer is,

that we have never experienced until we see the Savior's face, but could it be that there is another fly in our soup—something in our theology of sanctification that makes our sin problem worse by obscuring God's way of fighting it? That would be tragic! (That I have a broken arm is bad enough, but if I step in front of an oncoming lorry, the chances of my being in the peak of good health in the immediate future are quite slim.) Is it possible that we have some sort of a theological problem? Yes we do, and a serious one.

WHAT IS TRUE CHRISTLIKENESS?

We modern Evangelicals have two problems. One is that we have strayed from the Bible's teaching on the nature of sanctification. We all agree that Christians *should* be Christlike, but we are not sure precisely what that means. Neither are we clear on how holiness is produced. (When we see a sin problem, all we seem to know to do is throw the Law at it!) If we're not clear on what Christlikeness is or how to arrive at it, no wonder we are having a crisis in the church! Part III of *Sonship* (3-7 to 5-9) is dedicated to the study of the means of sanctification—how we become holy. Part IV is a look at the practical outworking of holiness with a focus on personal relationships. Here in 5-5, we will show that Biblical holiness can be defined in one simple word—love. "Too easy!" you say? Love is rarely easy. After this lesson, most people feel like they have been run over by an express train!

As a child, I had the impression that Christian holiness was nothing more than obeying the Ten Commandments. The truth is that when we have kept all ten of the commandments (externally), we are nothing more than good Pharisees and have not even begun to keep the law! Why is that? Because the essence of the law is spiritual—perfect love for God and our neighbor. We can outwardly keep the Ten Commandments without ever really loving anyone! For example, I may not have murdered my enemy, but if I have not loved him, have I been truly Christlike? (Matt. 5:43) Jesus said that if you love your enemies you are "true sons of your Father in heaven." Why? Because God loves his enemies and "makes

our natural tendency is to look for a way to escape this by reducing holiness to a set of easy-to-keep rules. Then, we can obey half-heartedly and still pronounce ourselves holy—very convenient, but not very honest. Jesus said,

"So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets. 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments." (Matt. 7: 12; 22: 27-40)

What strikes me about these verses is that we have strayed so far from a Biblical definition of holiness that Jesus sounds heretical!

Paul Miller, one of my colleagues, was a key developer of *Sonship Training* for the USA. We have done our best to picture one of his unique analogies here. "The Ten Commandments," he says, "are like a small bucket on the bottom of the vast sea of love." Yes, the Law requires love, but a shallow love, but a small one when compared to the standard of the "Royal Law of Love" described by Jesus, James and Paul.

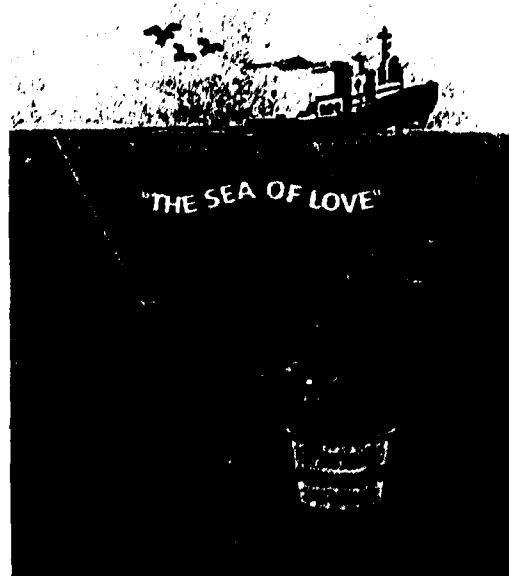


Fig. 5-3

Christian legalists are modern-day Pharisees. They "stay in the bucket," ignorant of the true nature of the Law. What about us? What will we do? I want to sail on the Gospel boat! Come with me. Let's brave the vastness of the "sea of love!" As we rely on the Holy Spirit (whose fruit is love), he will see to it that we sail toward God's goal—love and selfless service to him and our

neighbor. The good news is that as we shift our focus from the Law, fix our eyes on Jesus, and walk in the Spirit, we will more than "fill up" the tiny bucket of the Ten Commandments! We will not kill or hate—we will love. We will not steal or covet—we will share. We will not commit adultery or lust. We will serve our brothers and sisters in purity. This is true Christlikeness. Anything less is a pale imitation that neither pleases God nor brings him the honor and glory he desires and deserves.

- JWL -

A SIN TO FIGHT

THE SINFUL BEHAVIOR: _____

(Pick from: anger, lying, gossip, sexual immorality, wife beating, stealing, gossip, tribalism, or drunkenness.)

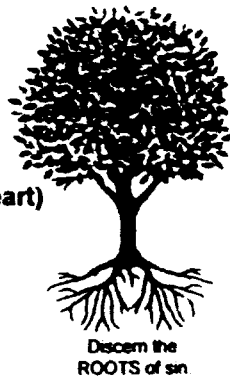
THINK: What entices a Christian into this sin?

A. EXTERNAL Forces (things outside him)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

B. INTERNAL Forces (the heart)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.



C. WHAT ARE THE GOALS of this sin? All behavior has a goal. What pleasure does it offer? "Mchovyie asali hechovyie mara moja." (He who dips his finger in honey does not do it [only] once.)

- 1.
- 2.

THE SINFULNESS OF SIN

Sin is not merely breaking rules.
It is failure to love.

SONSHIP for Africa J. W. Long Jr. 1997

LAW → "DON'T!"

THIS SIN BREAKS WHICH COMMANDMENT?

(See next page) No. _____



WHAT METHODS do parents, pastors and teachers usually use to try to inhibit this sin?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

ACCORDING TO YOUR OBSERVATIONS, have these methods been successful? (circle one)

Yes No Sometimes

QUESTION: If someone has avoided this sin outwardly, has he necessarily "kept the law?"

Yes No

What type of "obedience" did he give?

Outward / Inward? Forced / Willing?

DOES GOD CARE, as long as we "obey?"

Certainly! God isn't pleased if our "obedience" is nothing more than the unwilling compliance of a hard heart that would rather sin if it could avoid the consequences. He wants our love and respect, not fear. (I Jn. 4:16ff; Rom. 13:3,4; 8-10) The government will accept your tax payment no matter how you feel toward them. Your money satisfies them. But God wants our obedience to flow from a heart of love for him and others. "Man looks at the outside, but God looks on the heart." - I Sam. 16:7

GOSPEL → "LOVE!"

HOW DOES THIS SIN VIOLATE THE LAW OF LOVE? (Matt. 22) Describe it as a "failure to love."

WHAT are the "Ripple Effects" of this sin?



- 1 On the **SINNER**?
- 2 On the **VICTIM OF** or **PARTNER IN** the sin?
- 3 On **OTHER PEOPLE** affected by the sin?
- 4 But, who is **MOST INJURED**? (p. 5-5, 2, 10)

READ Rom. 7:4-6 and 8:12-16; I Tim. 1:3-11; Col. 2:21-23. What does Paul teach us about the relationship of law to obedience?

ACCORDING TO Gal. 3:2-5; 5:16,21 What is the Gospel's cure for this sin?

SUMMING UP: Faith sanctifies because: (1) Faith gives us the Spirit, and (2) the fruit of the Spirit is love, and (3) when we have loved, we have "kept the whole law." (Matt. 22:36, Jn. 15:1ff; Gal. 3:1-6; Rom. 13:8-10). Paul calls this "the obedience of faith" (Rom. 1:5) and "faith expressing itself through love" (Gal. 5:6) This brings God great glory!

1. THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

I - IV SUMMARY: LOVE the Lord your God...

EXODUS 20:3-20

- (I) You shall have no other gods before me.
- (II) You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below...
- (III) "You shall not misuse the name of the LORD your God..."
- (IV) "Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy..."

V - X SUMMARY: Love Your Neighbor...

- (V) "Honor your father and your mother..."
- (VI) "You shall not murder."
- (VII) "You shall not commit adultery."
- (VIII) "You shall not steal."
- (IX) "You shall not give false testimony..."
- (X) "You shall not covet..."

ISRAEL'S REACTION AT MOUNT SINAI

18 "When the people saw the thunder and lightning and heard the trumpet and saw the

mountain in smoke, they trembled with fear. They stayed at a distance and said to Moses. "Speak to us yourself and we will listen. But do not have God speak to us or we will die."

Moses said to the people, "Do not be afraid. God has come to test you, so that the fear of God will be with you to keep you from sinning."

ISRAEL'S INTENT TO OBEY THE LAW

Exodus 24:3 "When Moses went and told the people all the LORD's words and laws, they responded with one voice. *Everything the LORD has said we will do!*"

QUESTION: Did their fear of God actually keep them from sinning?

- a. Korah's Rebellion — Num. 16:30-50
- b. Molech Worship — Lev. 18:21 "Do not give any of your children to be sacrificed to Molech." Jer. 32:35 "They built high places for Baal ... to sacrifice their sons and daughters to Molech..." (cf. Isa. 57:5ff)

QUESTION: Why did the fear of God not keep them from sin and cause them to be holy? Does the fear of God control sin in our day?

2. THE LAW, THE GOSPEL & THE SINFULNESS OF SIN

Q: WHAT DOES THE BIBLE TEACH ABOUT...

1. THE NATURE OF THE LAW, AND
2. THE RELATIVE POWER OF THE LAW VS. THE GOSPEL TO RESTRAIN SIN AND PRODUCE HOLINESS IN OUR LIVES?

1. WHAT IS THE NATURE OF THE LAW?

The Law of God is Spiritual, Not External

The folly of Pharisaism was that it ignored this fact and externalized the law—or, to use our analogy in S-1, it "lowered the bar" so that it could be easily jumped. That is the fallacy of legalism—"imagined righteousness." (p. S4-1)

a. Matt. 22:35-40 "Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?" Jesus replied: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind." This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: "Love your neighbor as yourself." All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments." (See also next page, item "h." — Rom. 13:8-10.)

b. Ezek. 36:22! NEW COVENANT PROMISE:

"This is what the Sovereign LORD says: It is not for your sake, O house of Israel, that I am going to do these things, but for the sake of my holy name, which you have profaned among the nations... I will show the holiness of my great name... Then the nations will know that I am the LORD... when I show myself holy through you before their eyes."



Worksheet for "THE SINFULNESS OF SIN" Workshop

"Is the Law of God Good, and Should I Obey It?"

Absolutely. Unquestionably. But, there are two deeper questions:

"What is the Law?" — and — "How can I obey it?"

S-05
J.W. Long

Ezek. 36 cont. vs. 26,27 I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you: I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws.

Now, our second question:

2. WHAT DOES THE BIBLE TEACH ABOUT THE RELATIVE POWER OF THE LAW VS. THE SPIRIT TO RESTRAIN SIN AND PRODUCE HOLINESS IN OUR LIVES?

a. Rom. 7:4-6 So, my brothers, you also died to the law through the body of Christ, that you might belong to another, to him who was raised from the dead, in order that we might bear fruit to God. For when we were controlled by the flesh, the sinful passions aroused by the law were at work in our bodies so that we bore fruit for death. But now, by dying to what once bound us, we have been released from the law so that we serve in the new way of the Spirit, and not in the old way of the written code. (NOTE: Rom. 7:9ff — Paul actually says that the Law enticed him to sin. Why?)

b. Rom. 8:12-16 Therefore, brothers, we have an obligation, but it is not to the flesh, to live according to it. For if you live according to the flesh, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live, because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry "Abba, Father." The Spirit testifies with our

spirit that we are God's children. (We could say that the Holy Spirit is "God's Spy in the heart" — Gal. 4:4-6)

c. 1 Tim. 1:3-11 I urged you to command certain men not to teach false doctrines... These promote controversies rather than God's work—which is by faith. The goal of this command is love, which comes from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith. Some have wandered away from these... They want to be teachers of the law, but they do not know what they are talking about so confidently. We know that the law is good if one uses it properly. We know that law is made not for the righteous but for lawbreakers and rebels, the ungodly and sinful, the unholy & irreligious; for those who kill their fathers or mothers, for murderers, for adulterers & perverts, for slave traders and liars and perjurers—and for whatever else is contrary to the sound doctrine that conforms to the glorious gospel of...God...

d. Col. 2:21-23 "Do not handle! Do not taste! Do not touch!" These are all destined to perish with use, because they are based on human commands and teachings. Such regulations indeed have an appearance of wisdom... but they lack any value in restraining sensual indulgence.

e. Gal. 5:16,17 So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. For the flesh desires what is contrary to the Spirit... They are in conflict with each other, so that you do not do what you want. (The War within — Jas. 4:1ff)

f. Gal. 3:2-5; 24,25 I would like to learn just one thing from you: Having begun in the Spirit, are you now accomplishing your goal by human effort? (Gk. *sarka*, flesh) Have you suffered so much for nothing—if it really was for nothing? Does God keep giving you his Spirit and keep working miracles among you because you observe the law or because you believe what you heard? 24 So the law was made our schoolmaster to lead us to Christ that we might be justified by faith. Now that faith has come, we are no longer under the supervision of the law. * Greek present tense

g. Jas. 2:8-10 If you really keep the royal law found in Scripture, "Love your neighbor as yourself," you are doing right. But if you show favoritism, you sin and are convicted by the law as lawbreakers. For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it.

h. Rom. 13:8-10 Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another—for he who loves his fellow man has fulfilled the law. The commandments, Do not commit adultery, Do not murder, Do not steal, Do not covet, and whatever other commandment there may be are summed up in this one rule: Love your neighbor as yourself. Love does no harm to its neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law. (cf. Gal. 5:14)

THE CRITICAL QUESTIONS ARE: Where can we get the power to love, if to love is to keep the law? (e.) How can we get more of the Spirit whose fruit is love? (f.) KNOW THIS: If we will rely on faith in the Gospel for holiness, renewal will sweep through the Body of Christ again!

Active vs. Passive Righteousness

Finding Our Resting-place in Christ

***"Iaadht ballaan bakkalcha koo,
tchaphaan galaana koo jette."***

***"The mother said to her blind son,
'Morning star of mine,'
and to her lame son,
'Straight river of mine.'"***

- Oromo Proverb, Ethiopia -

How tenderly the Father in heaven views you! Sinner that you are, defective in mind and heart, he overlooks your defects and cherishes you in his heart. He sees you as beautiful—clothed in the righteousness of his own Son—and calls out your name, 'morning star of mine, straight river of mine—my child.'

"How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God!"

- 1 John 3:1 -



Fig. 6-1

ACTIVE VS. PASSIVE RIGHTEOUSNESS

Finding Our Resting Place in Christ

"I am not ashamed of the Gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile. For in the Gospel, a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: 'The righteous will live by faith.' Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." — Romans 1:16-17: 5:1

***"If the doctrine of justification is lost,
the whole of Christian doctrine is lost."***

— Martin Luther, 1535¹

INTRODUCTION

"ACTIVE VS. PASSIVE RIGHTEOUSNESS?" "JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH?" These sound like terribly complicated ideas! What do they mean? Why should they concern me?

Who was this "Martin Luther?" He was the Roman Catholic monk who in 1517 rediscovered the Biblical doctrine of "justification by faith." When Luther found it, he shared it. Rome was shaken to its roots, the doom of the Dark Ages was sealed, and the spiritual and intellectual liberation of Western man was begun. The Reformation paved the way for all the scientific and technological wonders of the modern age. Such is the liberating power of the Gospel—the Good News that sinners like us can gain acceptance before a holy God by virtue of our faith in the righteousness of Jesus Christ alone.

Since the day of Pentecost, history records that the Church has been playing a deadly game of lost and found with this doctrine. Why should that surprise us? Justification by faith is the foundation of our salvation. That is why the world, the flesh, and the devil have conspired to ensure that it has always been neglected or under assault. Had God not moved Martin Luther and those who followed him to launch what historians call the Protestant Reformation, you and I would not have the pure Gospel or the Scriptures in our own language. We would still be striving to earn the love of God, saying prayers for our dead relatives, and living in fear of the flames of purgatory.²

¹ See Appendix A. ² See page 26-28 for an explanation.

If you do not happen to be trained in church history and theology, this lesson will thoroughly acquaint you with the doctrine of justification by faith. Don't be put off by the technical sound of the terms justification, sanctification, and active and passive righteousness. Take up the challenge to understand, master and teach them to others! Justification (our legal pardon) and sanctification (growth in

holiness) are integrally related. In 5-7 we will study sanctification by faith and explore the relationship between the two doctrines. At that point, the **SHIP** course should "snap together" for you—like a jigsaw puzzle. We could say that justification by faith is salvation's centerpiece, and all the other

pieces fit around it. When we understand that, the Christian life is not so puzzling!

Justification by faith is not a theological abstraction. Study the Oromo proverb on page 6-0. It shows you the *result* of justification! What more could God do to prove his love for you? The cross of Christ proves that he will stop at nothing to redeem you as his child! You and I stand before the Father covered in a righteousness that is not our own! What? Oh, I see. You already knew that. That's good, but before you congratulate yourself, realize that it is possible to understand this doctrine inter-



Fig. 5-2

mutually and be teaching it to others without resting in it spiritually or being changed by it emotionally. That can happen to any of us. (Do you remember the struggle of Paul with Peter and Barnabas? Gal. 2)

The Gospel is "slippery" —like a wet bar of soap! It is easy to comprehend the facts of it, but actually be resting in our own merits to please God! That is why we keep pressing home the point that our acceptance before God never was and never will be based on our obedience to his Law, our theological education, the work we do for him—or even the fact that at some church meeting we raised our hand to "get saved." The only thing that can save us is faith in Jesus!

It has surprised all of us on the staff of World Harvest that a number of Evangelical pastors in the United States have actually been converted while taking *SONSHIP*. These were Bible believing, seminary trained men who were preaching the Word and seeing people converted under their ministries!

When Martin Luther began teaching the book of Romans at the German University of Erfurt in 1517, he struggled with Romans 1:17.

For in the Gospel, a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: "The righteous will live by faith."

Here is Luther's testimony of what happened as the truth of that verse dawned on him:

"Night and day I pondered until I saw the connection between the justice of God and the statement that 'the just shall live by faith.' Then I grasped that the justice of God is that righteousness by which through grace and sheer mercy, God justifies us through faith. Thereupon I felt myself to be reborn and to have gone through open doors into paradise. The whole of Scripture took on a new meaning, and whereas before, 'the justice of God' had filled me with hate, now it became to me inexpressibly sweet in greater love. This passage of Paul became to me a gate to heaven. . ."

It is sobering to think that Dr. Martin Luther, monk, ordained priest, distinguished Professor of Bible, had missed the central truth of Chris-

tian theology. But when the Spirit opened his eyes, he embraced Christ with all his heart—as his only righteousness. *That is what it means to be a Christian.* Luther could have been ashamed of his former ignorance, but Jesus had died for his shame too. He confessed his blindness, shared his discovery with all who would listen, and saw it change the world!

This may seem like an odd place to bring up the question of salvation—in "A Discipleship Course for Disciples"—but not really. If three of Paul's Galatian churches, and the Apostle Peter with Barnabas (Paul's ministry companion), and James the Just (the half-brother of Jesus, and leader of the Jerusalem church), and several ordained pastors in the United States were confused about grace and needed to examine *their* faith, how can we be too proud to examine ours? Paul saw

so much self-centeredness and lack of power over sin in the Corinthian church (their many spiritual gifts notwithstanding).

he wrote then this bit of advice:

Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves. Do you not realize that Christ Jesus is in you—unless, of course, you fail the test?

— 2 Cor. 13:5,6

What test? This test: "In what are you trusting for your righteousness? And, if you say you are trusting Christ, is your faith changing you?" Does it offend that we ask? If so, that is a bad sign. Who of us can profess to be above the need to search his own heart? Search yours as I search mine, and *if we fail the test*, let us repent, believe the Gospel, be converted, and go forth like Luther to tell everyone the great thing the Lord has done for us—yes, even if we are pastors! The alternative is unthinkable. *If you "pass the test,"* be encouraged! The Father is looking at you this very moment as his perfect child. You are covered in the righteousness of His Son.

May God richly bless our minds and our hearts in this study—to deepen our intellectual grasp of the core of the Gospel, and to tenderize our hearts as we respond to his love for us.

— JWJ —

I. ACTIVE VS. PASSIVE — WHAT IS THE REAL SOURCE OF CHRISTIAN RIGHTEOUSNESS



Fig. 6-3

act·ive (ák'tív) — adj.

1. In action; moving.
 2. Functioning or capable of functioning.
 3. Causing or initiating action or change.
 4. In a state of action; not passive.
- GRAMMAR:** *The subject of the sentence is performing or causing the action expressed by the verb, e.g., "I kicked the football."*

If we move away from football and think about the word "active" in terms of how we get and maintain righteousness before God, the term "active righteousness" refers to our attempts to *act* in ways that will *earn us merit* in God's sight. In other words, as regards righteousness, *I am active*; I do the work; I produce it. Now, we believers know that we can't do anything to merit salvation. We know that God justifies us as a gift of his grace based on our faith in the atoning work of Christ on the cross. But, after we are saved, we can easily forget that, and fall into the trap of believing that it is up to us to produce an "active righteousness to keep God happy with us. In other words, we fall for the lie of "sanctification by works." This, you remember, is what happened in the Galatian churches.

Remember: Jesus not only died for us, he lives for us! Twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, he is on duty as our Great High Priest. (Heb. 7:25) He is seated at the right hand of the Father, interceding for us, covering us with his blood and *his* righteousness. When God looks at us, he does not see us as sinful objects of wrath, but as his beautiful sons and daughters—clothed in the righteousness of his Son. We don't need "active righteousness." We have Christ's!

pas·sive (pás'ív) — adj.

1. Receiving or being subjected to an action without responding or initiating an action in return.
2. Accepting without objection or resistance; compliant.
3. Not participating, acting, or operating; inert.

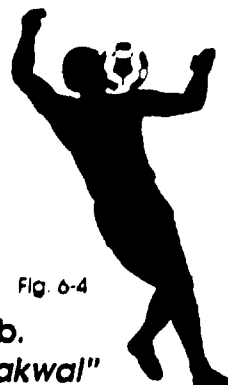


Fig. 6-4

GRAMMAR: *The subject is the object of the effect of the verb. e.g. "I was hit by the football." Or, "All, ninoliwe ni mavuku makwal" "Ninoliwe" is passive—"I was forgotten by my books!" - Kikamba (Kenya)*

What is "passive righteousness"? It is being "passive" (not active) regarding righteousness. Martin Luther compared our role in salvation to the earth which can do nothing to produce the rain; it can only lie there and soak it up. We can do nothing to contribute to our own salvation. We must rely on the grace of God and the merits of Christ *alone*. In order to be saved, we believe—not try, not do. So, when we approach the Father, we don't need to remind him of the things we have done or intend to do for him—as if they somehow make us worthy to enter his presence. We go to him conscious that our sins—past, present and future—have been "nailed to the cross" of Christ so that we no longer bear the guilt for them. Our sins cannot separate us from him because we approach the Father clothed in the righteousness of his own Son, Christ is our worthiness, and so our consciences can be clean before God's infinite holiness. (Heb. 10:19-22) We neither have nor need any "active righteousness." The righteousness of Jesus is ours. We are clothed in the sinless perfection of another—something we do not have and we could never have produced. We only receive it by faith, thus we are "passive" in it.

"THE BIGGEST CONFLICT OF ALL"

by Dr. C. John (Jack) Miller

In World Harvest Mission's work in Western Uganda, the biggest conflict in the churches today is over how to recover holiness of life among the members. In a time of moral decay inside and outside the church, many of our believing friends there find themselves confused about what it means to be saved—and what it means to be holy.

Some people think you are holy if you do not drink alcoholic beverages or dance. Others think that you are holy if you speak in tongues or do miracles. Still others believe that holiness has to do with a strict style of dressing, not keeping dogs, not wearing jewelry, or of denying yourself all pleasures.

Many people think that ceremonies like baptism are necessary in order for a person to be saved, and that even taking a "Christian name" will help. To put it simply, they feel that if you want to be saved—really saved—you have to become very religious.

So, for a while they may try very hard to "be saved"—which they think means keeping all the commandments of God and the rules of their church. But, they do not become more holy. Instead, they become backsliders and end up saying, "holiness is for old people." The reason they lose hope is that they know very little about Jesus. It is natural, when we know little about Jesus, to become cynical about churches and church people. They hear reports that religious leaders are jealous of one another, and they can see that people who claim to be saved are proud and look down on others.

They wonder if God is really alive since they believe there are so many hypocrites in the churches. They become very fearful and discouraged. Since God seems to have so many followers who are less than holy, they come to doubt whether God can be trusted to help them.

The purpose of this SONSHIP lesson is to show Christian leaders how God produces holiness in lives. He does this through the Gospel. No other power in this world creates holiness—only the preaching of the cross. And, since we forget nothing sooner than this truth, the effective Christian leader must repent again and again for not laboring enough to make the Gospel clear—first to his own mind, and then to others. If the devil attacks you he will do it here because he wants to blur your understanding of the nature of the cross more than anything else!

— Jack Miller

II. THIS ARTICLE HAS HIGHLIGHTED THE TWO BIG QUESTIONS WE DEAL WITH IN THE SONSHIP COURSE

a. *How can I be saved, and how do I stay saved?* That is, on what basis do I gain and keep my acceptance before God?

b. *How can I grow in holiness (Christlikeness) after I have been saved?*

Our purpose is to demonstrate from the Scriptures that the answer to both these questions is the same. Faith in the righteousness of Jesus Christ gives us both the forgiveness of our sins (justification) and power over indwelling sin so that we grow in holiness (sanctification).



Fig. 6-5

III. A FOUR-STEP EXERCISE TO HELP US UNDERSTAND JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH AND ITS RELATIONSHIP TO SANCTIFICATION

STEP ONE

IN 100 WORDS OR LESS, write out a definition of "Justification by Faith"—using your own words!

(You may find it helpful to do this in two stages—first, by defining justification, and then showing its relationship to faith.)

"Justification by Faith is. . .

STEP TWO

TAKE THIS QUIZ: Circle A or B—whichever one you think is the most accurate.

1. A. Justification is a single act of God on our behalf.
 B. Justification is an ongoing work of God in us.
2. A. Justification determines my relationship with God from beginning to end.
 B. Justification is only for the beginning of my Christian life.
3. A. Justification is God changing me to be righteous.
 B. Justification is God declaring me to be righteous.
4. A. Faith alone justifies us by uniting us to Christ.
 B. Faith together with baptism justifies us by uniting us to Christ.
5. A. The only basis for our justification is Jesus' love.
 B. The only basis for our justification is Jesus' righteousness.
6. A. Faith in Jesus + Our Good Works = Salvation
 B. Faith in Jesus + 0 = Salvation + Good Works
7. A. "Imputation" means that God does not count us guilty because of the righteousness of Christ.
 B. "Imputation" means that God deposits Christ's righteousness to our account.
8. A. Justification has no human cooperation involved in it, but sanctification requires our cooperation.
 B. Neither justification nor sanctification involves human cooperation.

9. A. Faith in the righteousness of Jesus is what makes me holy.
B. Trying harder to obey the law of God is what makes me holy.
10. A. Justification frees us from all responsibility to obey the Ten Commandments.
B. Justification brings us a new life in which we keep the Law in the new way of the Spirit.

STEP THREE READ CAREFULLY THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS ABOUT JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH — and critically compare your definition with them.

A. The Heidelberg Catechism : Questions #20, 21

- Q. Are all men saved through Christ just as all were lost in Adam?**
A. No. Only those are saved who by true faith are grafted into Christ and accept all His blessings.
- Q. What is true faith?**
A. True faith. . . is also a deep-rooted assurance created in me by the Holy Spirit through the gospel that, not only others, but I too, have had my sins forgiven, and have been granted salvation. These are gifts of sheer grace, earned for us by Christ.

B. The Westminster Shorter Catechism : Question 33

- Q. What is justification?**
A. Justification is an act of God's free grace, whereby He pardons all our sins and accepts us as righteous in His sight, only for the righteousness of Christ imputed to us and received by faith alone. (Eph. 1:7; 2 Cor. 5:19,21; Rom. 3:22-25; 4:5, 6-8, 5:1; 17-19; Acts 10:43; Gal. 2:16; Phil. 3:9)

C. The Philadelphia Confession of Faith of 1742

This was first called "The London Confession of 1689" but was adopted by the Baptist Association of Philadelphia, Sept. 25, 1742, thirty-four years before the newly formed "states" in the Americas declared their Independence from Britain, July 4, 1776.

NOTE: Don't be confused by the use of "active" and "passive" below. They refer to two aspects of Christ's obedience to the Father—"active" in his keeping of the law, and "passive" as our sacrificial lamb who was sacrificed for us.

Chapter IX "OF JUSTIFICATION"

1. Those whom God effectually calls, he also freely justifies, not by infusing righteousness into them but by pardoning their sins, and by accounting and accepting them as righteous, not for anything produced in them, or done by them, but for Christ's sake alone; not by imputing faith itself, the act of believing, or any other evangelical obedience to them, as their righteousness; but by imputing Christ's active obedience unto the whole law, and passive obedience in his death for their whole and sole

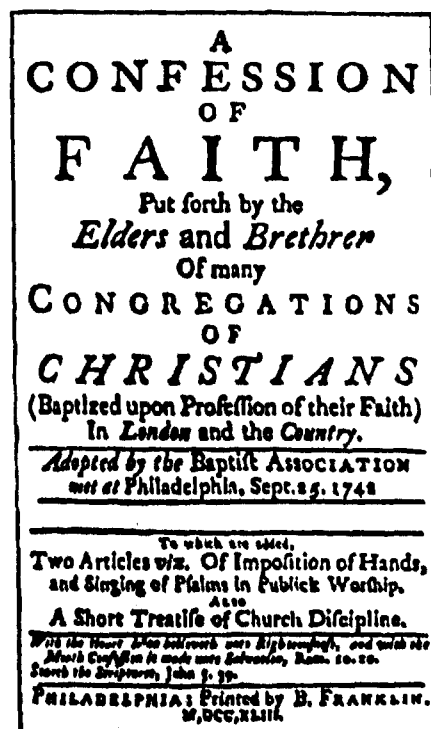


Fig. 6-6

righteousness: they receiving and resting on him and his righteousness by faith, which they have not of themselves; it is the gift of God (p. 35, 36).

2. Faith thus receiving and resting on Christ and his righteousness, is alone the instrument of justification; yet it (faith) is not alone in the person justified, but is always accompanied by all other saving graces, and is not dead faith, but worketh by love (p. 36).

D. Martin Luther (1535)

"Through faith in Christ, therefore, Christ's righteousness becomes our righteousness and all that He has becomes ours; rather He Himself becomes ours."

E. John Calvin (1555)

"... a man will be justified by faith when, excluded from righteousness of works, he by faith lays hold of the righteousness of Christ, and clothed in it, appears in the sight of God not as a sinner, but as righteous. . ."

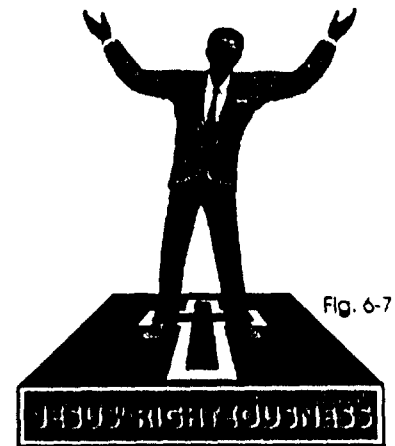
A QUESTION: Since we do not need works righteousness to be saved, does that mean that we can be lazy Christians? Calvin spoke to this by paraphrasing James 2 this way:

We are saved by faith apart from works, but the faith that saves, is a faith that works."

NOW you are ready for "Step Four" — your "final exam" in justification by faith!

STEP FOUR JUSTIFICATION WORKSHOP: WRITE YOUR "NEW AND IMPROVED" definition of Justification by Faith — and be prepared to discuss it.

"Justification by Faith in Jesus Christ is. . .



IV. IN CONCLUSION:

A. DO YOU have any questions? Confusion? Arguments? If so, make a note of them and be sure to raise the issues in class.

1.

2.

HE'S FREE!

Free from what? The bondage of the Law! — Rom. 7:6a

Free to do what? Free to obey in the new way of the Spirit rather than the old way of the written code! — Rom. 7:6b

B. Luther's "Argument to the Galatians"

Martin Luther was no simple parish priest. He was a Doctor of Sacred Theology, university professor, and the head of the Augustinian Order in the Roman Catholic Church. While teaching the New Testament in a Catholic university, he rediscovered the Biblical doctrine of justification by faith. This led to his posting of a ninety-five item protest against the Church's practice of selling indulgences from purgatory. Purgatory, or so the Church taught (and teaches), is a place where believers are fitted for heaven by having their sins "purged" away by flames like those of hell. "Indulgences" are grants sold to families of those supposedly suffering purgatorial torment—with the promise that their loved ones will escape further suffering and be allowed into heaven.

If you have survived this lesson, and are ready to give your English usage and theological skill a real test (and get blessed in the process) turn to **Appendix A** in the rear of the manual and carefully work through Luther's "Argument to the Galatians."

- C. **Hymns can help us put our faith into words.** These truths in these two should awaken our cold hearts and fill them with songs of praise! The first is a bold testimony; the second is a prayer to Christ our Rock. Read them slowly, and make the words your own.

THE SOLID ROCK

Edward Mote, 1797-1874 (vs. 1, 3, 4)

My hope is built on nothing less than Jesus' blood and righteousness.
I dare not trust the sweetest frame, but wholly lean on Jesus' name.
On Christ the solid Rock I stand; all other ground is sinking sand.

His hope, his covenant, his blood, support me in the whelming flood.
When all around my soul gives way, He then is all my hope and stay.
On Christ the solid Rock I stand; all other ground is sinking sand.

When he shall come with trumpet sound, Oh, may I then in Him be found.
Dressed in His righteousness alone, faultless to stand before the throne.
On Christ the solid Rock I stand; all other ground is sinking sand.



ROCK OF AGES

by Augustus M. Toplady, 1740 - 1778

Rock of Ages, cleft for me, Let me hide myself in Thee;
Let the water and the blood, From Thy wounded side which flowed,
Be of sin the double cure — cleanse me from its guilt and power.

Not the labors of my hands, Can fulfill Thy law's demands;
Could my zeal no respite know, Could my tears for ever flow,
All for sin could not atone; Thou must save, and Thou alone.

Nothing in my hand I bring, Simply to Thy cross I cling;
Naked, come to Thee for dress, Helpless, look to Thee for grace;
Foul, I to the fountain fly, Wash me, Saviour, or I die!

While I draw this fleeting breath, When my eyes shall close in death,
When I soar to worlds unknown, See Thee on Thy judgment throne.
Rock of Ages, cleft for me, Let me hide myself in Thee.



Answers to the Justification Quiz: 1. A. 2. A. 3. B. 4. A. 5. B. 6. B. 7. B. 8. A. 9. A. 10. B

AN OUTLINE OF GALATIANS

AND STUDY QUESTIONS

by Jack Miller — Revised by J.W. Long for SONSHIP for Africa

The Freedom of Sons Vs. The Bondage of Legalism

This book was written to the church of Galatia to prove that if gentile converts obeyed the Judaizers' rule and allowed themselves to be circumcised, they would lose the glorious freedom they had in Christ and fall back into bondage. The outline which follows is intended to help you understand the book so that you will be blessed and bless those who hear you expound the sheer delight and freedom to be found in the gospel. Keeping your eyes fixed on Jesus gives you the strength to resist the need to indulge your flesh and perform for God and others. Faith in Christ frees you from the need to "produce a record," and, gives you the ability to please Christ by *"the obedience that comes from faith."* (Rom. 1:5)

For the Christian, the relevant question is not "should we obey the Law of God," but "how can we be enabled to obey the law?" Romans 7:6 has the Gospel's New Covenant answer: *"But now, having died to the Law which once bound us, we serve in the new way of the Spirit, and not in the old way of the written code."* Even deeper than the question of keeping the law outwardly, is the question of why we are obeying. The Pharisees "obeyed," but their motives were: (1) to "look good" (pride) and, (2) to escape punishment (fear). How about you and me? Are we like them, or do we obey from the heart because we love God and want to bring glory to Him?

AN OUTLINE OF GALATIANS

THEME: The Gospel is the only source of freedom and power for God's sons & daughters.

SUMMARY: 4:4-7 — The Freedom of Sons:

"But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law, to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons. Because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, 'Abba-Father.' So you are no longer a slave, but a son; and since you are a son, God has made you also an heir."

"A Legal Right" — We have "the full rights of sons." We are heirs. Justification by faith gives us the adoption of sons and leads to . . .

"A Personal Delight" — Fellowship with our "Abba-Father!"

INTRODUCTION: 1:1-9

- A. The Gospel: The source of the Christian's freedom and power — 1:1-5
- B. The Gospel: The conflict of the Gospel with rival messages — 1:6-9

I. THE GOSPEL: ITS DIVINE ORIGIN & AUTHORITY 1:1—2:21

- A. The Gospel is from God—Not Human Insight — 1:10-17
- B. The Gospel Did Not Have Its Origin in Judean Churches — 1:18-24
- C. The Gospel Did Not Originate with Judaizers — 2:1-10
- D. The Gospel Did Not Originate with Peter, the Apparent Apostolic Leader — 2:11-21

II. THE GOSPEL'S POWER VS. THE POWERLESSNESS OF KEEPING THE LAW — 3:1-4:31

- A. The Power Choice: Faith vs. Works — 3:1-5**
- B. The Power of the Gospel Proved from the Old Testament — 3:6-14**
- C. The Primacy of Gospel over Law Is Proved by God's Promise to Abraham — 3:15-22**
- D. The Primacy of the Gospel Is Shown by the Limitations of the Law — 3:23-4:7**
- E. The Primacy of the Gospel Is Proved by the Foolishness of Legalism — 4:8-11**
- F. The Primacy of the Gospel Is Shown by Comparing the Motives of Gospel Teachers with the Motives of Law Teachers — 4:12-20**
- G. The Liberating Power of the Gospel Is Dramatized by Contrasting It with the Bondage of Legalism (Hagar) — 4:21-31**

III. THE FRUITS OF FAITH IN THE GOSPEL — 5:1-6:10

- A. Principle: The Freedom of Sons Defended — 5:1**
- B. The Deadly Fruits of Lawkeeping — 5:2-12**
- C. The Fruits of Faith in the Gospel — 5:13-14**
- D. The Results of Legalism: The Tongue Out of Control — 5:15**
- E. The Conflict Between Flesh & Spirit — 5:16-24**

IV. SONS & DAUGHTERS LIVING IN LOVE UNDER THE GOSPEL — 5:25-6:18

- A. Our Relationship to the Spirit — 5:25**
- B. Our Relationship to Others — 5:26-6:10**
- C. Suffering for the Sake of Christ's Cross — 6:11-13**
- D. Boasting in the Cross of Christ — 6:14-17**
- E. The Benediction of Grace — 6:18**

STUDY QUESTIONS ON GALATIANS

QUESTIONS ON CHAPTERS 1 & 2

1. Those who came to the Galatian converts told them that they must be circumcised according to the Law of Moses if they really wanted to be accepted by God. They said in effect, "You must have the blood of Christ—PLUS your works." What does Paul call this teaching? 1:6-9
2. What does he say that circumcision (for "righteousness") will do to the power of the cross? 2:21
3. Why did Paul think it important for people to know the gospel came from God not man? 1:11-12
4. Why does he publicly correct Peter for refusing to eat with uncircumcised Gentile believers? 2:11-14
5. Do you know of groups of Christians today who separate themselves from other Christians and sinners for legalistic reasons? What are some of their "laws?" How do they treat "lawbreakers?"
6. What are the two "methods" of justification described in 2:16-21?
7. Which way is unable to justify people at all? 2:16b?

8. In Romans 6, Paul says he died to sin, but in Galatians 2:19 he says he "died to the law." What does he mean by that?
9. In Gal. 2:20 he says that *"I have been crucified with Christ."* Why does he put this act in the past? What does it have to do with justification?
10. If his having been crucified with Christ is not an experience but a fact, where does experience enter the picture in 2:20?

QUESTIONS ON CHAPTERS 3 & 4

1. What is the connection between faith and the working of the spirit? — 3:1-5
2. Is there a connection between doing the works of the law and the flesh? — 3:1-5
3. Why does Paul want the Galatians to know that Abraham was justified by faith? — 3:6-9
4. Discuss: *"To be fully accepted by God you must believe in Christ, be baptized, and keep The Law."*
5. What two "sendings" are mentioned in 4:4-7?
6. How can the fact of these two sendings help you to become more effective and joyful in prayer?
7. What does the book of Galatians have to say about the value of using ceremonies from books like Leviticus? — Gal. 3:21-25; 4:8-11
8. What is the spiritual significance of the two covenants and two mountains mentioned in 4:21-31?

QUESTIONS ON CHAPTERS 5 & 6

1. If we are justified by Christ through faith without works, does this mean we can live as we please? — 5:13-15; 2:20.
2. What is the inevitable fruit of faith? — 5:6
3. Does the link between faith and love in 5:6 give you any hint as to the *root* of the spiritual *fruit* mentioned in 5:22-23? What?
4. Discuss this statement: *"The measure of your faith is the measure of the Spirit's loving presence in your life. If you have an abundant faith you will be deeply thankful for Christ's lifting the curse from you, and you will live a life filled with much love."*
5. In this last section you learn that the cross is mentioned at least eight times in Galatians. What does this tell you about the source of forgiveness and holiness for the sons of God?
6. Why do you think the works of the flesh are called "works" whereas the "fruit of the Spirit" is called "fruit"? — 5:19-23
7. Do you think it is significant that *love* is mentioned as the first aspect of fruit? — 5:22
Why is that? (Think of the true character of the Law as Jesus summarized it in Matthew 22:36ff.)

8. What happens when professing Christians gossip about one another? — 5:15
9. How should you treat gossip in your own life — 5:16, 5:24.
10. Can you describe gossip as another way to obtain “righteousness” or as “another gospel?”
11. Here are seven actions of faith found in Chapter 6. How are you actively bearing fruit in each of these areas?
 - a. lifting up the fallen — 6:1
 - b. bearing one another’s burdens — 6:2-3
 - c. bearing your own burdens (responsibilities) — 6:4-5
 - d. supporting your pastor financially — 6:6
 - e. sowing good deeds reaps a harvest of righteousness — 6:7-10
 - f. glorying only in the cross — 6:12-15
 - g. bearing the marks of the cross in our bodies (i.e. persecution for Christ’s sake) — 6:17

Six Indicators That Justification is by Faith and Not by Works

Reason 1: The Holy Spirit is initially received by faith, not by works — 3:1-14.

Reason 2: The cross, not our obedience to the law, took away the curse of the law — 3:10-13.

Reason 3: In history, the promise of the gospel came to Abraham—*before* the giving of the Law to Moses, so our justification did not need, nor can it be canceled by the law — 3:15-18

Reason 4: The purpose of the law and its nature is not to justify us but to make us conscious of the greatness of our transgressions and therefore our need for Christ’s pardon. — 3:19-25.

Reason 5: Now that Christ has come we are no longer under the servitude of the law but are free sons having the Spirit of the Father. — 3:23-4:7.

Reason 6: As free sons it is madness to return to slavish law codes (4:8-11), to turn against the teachings of free grace (4:12-20), and put yourself under the condemnation of the law of Sin — 4:21.

FOUR OBSERVATIONS FROM CHAPTER FIVE

1. **The Gospel climaxes in liberated living to the Glory of the Father:** Bearing fruit by the cross and by faith — 5:1-6:1
2. **Circumcision (lawkeeping) leads to condemnation and death**, but the cross through faith bears fruit in our lives. — 5:1-12
3. **We are not given our freedom from the law so that we can serve the flesh**—but so that we can bear much fruit for Christ! — 5:13-26.
4. **The Cross means our death to the law as condemnation** and we learn it means our death to the flesh. — 5:24.

Answers for Questions on Galatians

Chapters 1 & 2

1. 1:6-9 (A different gospel, no gospel at all)
2. 1:21 (It has no power. It is meaningless.)
3. 1:11-12 (If it was from man, then it was just a human invention.)
4. 2:11-14, esp. v. 14 (they were not acting in line with the truth of the Gospel.)
5. Various answers
6. 2:16-21 (Faith in Christ, not observing the Law.)
7. 2:16b (Justification by the law)
8. Since Paul was crucified with Christ, then he has died and is "a corpse". A corpse can't be held under the law since it is free from the laws of men.
9. Paul sees that because Jesus died in real history, and as he himself is united to Jesus by faith, he is dead to sin. We call this: "vicarious atonement" (at + one + ment — a word coined by Wm. Tyndale to describe the effect of redemption). God and man made one by our vicarious link with Jesus in His death)
10. 2:20 (Justification is by faith, not by works 3:1 - 4:31)

Chapters 3 & 4

1. 3:1-5 (The spirit is given to those who believe and keep on believing in Jesus.)
2. 3:1-5 (They are the same; both human effort)
3. 3:6-9 (Because if Abraham lived by faith then they, and we, should too.)
4. (To be fully accepted by God you need Christ alone, not baptism or obedience to the commandments.)
5. 4:4-7 (1. God sent His Son and 2. God sent the Spirit of His Son.)
6. We now talk to the Father clothed in the Righteousness of Jesus, and we "pray in the Spirit" (Jude 2 Eph. 6:18). The Spirit is the friend of the weak and our helper in prayer. (Romans 8:16)
7. 3:21-25; 4:8-11 Ceremonies were only to point to Christ. Now we have Christ, and are freed from the Law.
8. 4:21-31 If we rely on lawkeeping to please God, we come under the curse of the law as "children of Hagar."

Chapters 5 & 6

1. 5:13-15 (No. Now we live by the power of the Spirit, keeping the law of love.)
2. 5:6 (Love. Matthew 22:37-39 is realized)
3. 5:6 & 5:22-23 (Faith in Jesus is the power that brings new life in the Spirit.)
4. (General discussion)
5. (The Cross is central to justification, and sanctification)
6. 5:19-23 ("Works" take great effort and are not naturally produced, whereas "fruit" grows without visible effort on the part of the tree that produces it. In John 15:5 Jesus teaches that fruit is produced by abiding in Him, not by working hard to be good.)
7. 5:22 ("Love" Absolutely! When we have loved God and man, we have kept the law! Romans 13:8 ff.)
8. 5:15 (The Gospel is thwarted in their lives, because we are manufacturing a false "righteousness" by comparing our good behavior to the bad behavior of others—instead of resting in the righteousness of Christ.)
9. 5:16, 5:24 (We can resist the temptation to gossip by resting in the righteousness of Christ and consciously letting Jesus "clothe" us. This passive "resting" is active faith operating powerfully!)
10. (See Answer No. 8)
11. Discuss how you may actively bear fruit in these seven areas.



PART THREE

THE MEANS OF SANCTIFICATION

The Same Faith that Justifies — Sanctifies

§7 - I Believe in Order to Be Holy

§8 - The Normal Christian Life

§9 - Defeating the flesh



Fig. 7-1

HOW TO CHANGE and Lead Others to Change

by John Wade Long, Jr.

"But now by dying to what once bound us, we have been released from the law so that we serve in the new way of the Spirit, and not in the old way of the Written Code." — Romans 7:6

WHEN we want to grow in grace—or help others grow, how should we go about it? The two most popular recommendations are: practicing the "spiritual disciplines," and keeping the law. Let's have a look at these, and at what might be a surprising alternative—simple Gospel faith.

THE SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES

In his book *Celebration of Discipline: The Path to Spiritual Growth*,¹ Richard Foster divides the disciplines into three categories: *inward* (meditation, prayer, fasting, study), *outward* (simplicity, solitude, submission, service), and *corporate* (worship, confession, guidance, and celebration). Foster's book has much to commend it, but sadly, my heroic

attempts a decade ago to put his principles into practice yielded little real growth in terms of love for others, a desire to win the lost and purity in my thought life. Not only did I not "fly," I never got off the ground. At Sonship Week in 1990, I discovered the reason. My "spiritual aeroplane" had been without an engine—faith was missing.

In saying that faith was missing I don't mean that I wasn't saved. What I mean is that I had the Christian life backwards. My approach had been to "do the disciplines" to get nearer to Christ and grow in holiness. What is wrong with that? Just this: doing activities to "get near to God"—even good ones—ignores the most powerful and liberating fact of the Gospel—

that we already have all of Christ we can possibly have by simple faith. We are near him, and he us. In order to grow more, we need to believe more. It is "looking" at Christ that empowers us to grow. Put another way, *faith is*

the engine in the aeroplane of the Christian life! Are we suggesting that the spiritual disciplines have no value? Not at all, but their value depends on how we use them. Used wrongly—as a form of merit or penance—they are harmful to our spiritual health because they obscure the Gospel. But when they flow from faith, as means of expressing faith rather than attempts to obtain grace, they grow faith! Otherwise they are striving after wind. Let me illustrate this principle using solitude and fasting.



Fig. 7-2

Pastor Kamau strives to grow in holiness.

"Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, will you now try to attain your goal by human effort?" Gal. 3:3

Joy in Solitude Last year I took a four-day "solitude retreat" in a deserted mission house four hours outside Nairobi. It was one of the most refreshing times of my Christian life. Why? Because my soul was hungry and thirsty, and I knew that there would be great benefit in spending uninterrupted time with my Father. I didn't go there to "reach him," in fact our fellowship on the long drive out was just a prelude to the communion that followed. I entertained no notion that the discipline of solitude would merit anything. There was a time when I didn't understand this and it led to one of the more notable embarrassments of my pastoral ministry.

The Fasting Disaster In the mid-1980s while preaching through Matthew's gospel

I became convinced that my congregation would get out of our spiritual slump and begin to grow in grace if we would learn the art of fasting. So, I began a grand experiment which began with sermonic mini-series on fasting—its benefits, its right and wrong uses, etc. (relying heavily on Foster). Twenty brave souls volunteered to join me as fellow “guinea pigs.” We committed to fast one, two or three



Mutua “disciples” his son.

Fig. 7-3 days every week for six weeks and kept careful records on our physical and spiritual progress (or lack thereof) on detailed forms I had designed. At the end of the trial, as promised, we reported our findings to the congregation. And what an end it was. We were twenty-one physically hungry and spiritually disillusioned Christians who

were neither more holy nor nearer God for all our effort. I was baffled. What had gone wrong? Looking back, I can see that we were fasting to “get more of Christ,” or “get closer to Christ.” But, our striving actually came between us and him! Jesus had been ready to welcome us, to be with us without fasting. But our insistence on doing something to merit his closeness spoiled the relationship. My “solitude retreat,” on the other hand, began with and was nourished by faith. That is why it produced greater faith and tangible obedience.

Don't the spiritual disciplines have any role? Of course they do! Prayer, Bible study, fasting, meditation, solitude all have tremendous value —when practiced in faith.

KEEPING THE LAW Let us be clear: every believer has an obligation to keep the moral Law. What is the Law but an expression of the will of God for us now and for all time. A major reason heaven will be heavenly is that the law will be kept perfectly there! Sin and weakness will be banished and we will have more than just the desire to love God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength, and our neighbor as ourselves. We will have the ability. But as long as we are in this life, we will be in deep trouble if we assume that striving to keep the law will lead to growth in holiness. Why is this? The Law cannot do the job, that's why. During the Reformation, Luther noted that there was a lot

of Law preached in the Roman Church. But, he cried, “the law is not kept!” The reason was that the Church was teaching sanctification by moral will power. That means that you try to mortify the flesh by the power of the flesh. It shouldn't take a rocket scientist to figure out that if the flesh is the problem, trying to solve the problem with the problem is a bad idea. Still, I tried it for the first thirty years of my Christian life. It never worked for me. How about for you?

So, the question of questions is: “What can motivate and empower us to change from being fleshly, self-centered creatures into people who have the glory of God and the good of others as our daily passion?” Or, put another way, what produces holiness? We have assumed that it comes from obedience —“obey to be holy!” Not so. When we didn't have the power to obey, God sent his Son, and the Gospel's message is, “believe to be holy!” In his introduction to Romans (1:5 NIV), Paul uses a crucial but rarely noticed (and sometimes mistranslated) phrase:

“Through him and for his name's sake, we received grace and apostleship to call people from among all the Gentiles to the obedience that comes from faith.”

Did you see it? Paul preached obedience by faith—a living faith in Christ. He was never satisfied (nor should we be) when people merely believed things about Christ, or when they tried to obey Christ out of duty. Paul's objective was for people to believe Christ, trust Christ, look at Christ, feed on Christ and abide in Christ. Faith of that nature produces obedience.

Fig. 7-4



If you really want to help others change, disciple them in how to walk with Jesus. Their relationship with Jesus will change them!

So, if you really want to help others change, disciple them in what it means to believe the Gospel. Then, their relationship with Jesus will change them. Why? Because holiness is born in a person-to-person, face-to-face, heart-to-heart relationship with the Father, through Christ by the Spirit.

HOLINESS THROUGH RELATIONSHIP

The root of holiness is our relationship with Christ. Jesus said, *"If you abide in me and my words abide in you...you will bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples. Without me, you can do nothing."* (cf. John 15:1ff) Jesus' "abide" passage is one of the most familiar in the New Testament but it seems that we read it (even memorize it) but then rush off to find some method to systematize our "abiding!" The problem is that our systems can't connect us to Christ—only faith can. Have you ever prayed and read the Bible, but failed to make a "heart-to-heart" connection with Jesus? I have. Many times. That's because Bible reading in and of itself has no power in it. (Adolf Hitler knew chapters of the Bible by heart. So does the devil.) Faith is where the power is. Why is faith so powerful? Because faith connects weak people to a mighty Christ, and, when we are connected to Christ, the Holy Spirit gives us the character of Christ—holiness—Christlikeness. And what's more, the fruit (the "real stuff") of holiness is relationships—loving relationships with God and our people. Paul told the Galatians, *"In Christ Jesus, neither circumcision nor uncircumcision (doing or not doing works) is of any value; the only thing that counts, is faith expressing itself through love."* (5:6) Where can we get the power to love other sinners? That kind of power comes from only one place. The power to love like Jesus only comes from Jesus—as we go directly to him with our inability and ask the Holy Spirit to fill us with his love. Ask for the Spirit, Jesus said (Luke 11:13). There is no other way.

This is strange. We already know this! Why can't we keep it straight? Why do we keep forgetting it? In a word, our flesh. Our resistance to walk in childlike dependence and our constant search for some method to "make our life work" is deeply rooted in our spirit of independence from God—our flesh! We like to joke that Sonship is "the discipleship program that doesn't work." Why? Because it doesn't work! Sonship has proved to be a powerful, life-changing tool in the lives of thousands of believers, but it doesn't work. You believe, and when you believe, you work! Obedience follows faith—"the obedience of faith." Sonship is designed to shatter our illusions of that we can attain to holiness in any-

thing or anyone but by daily, dependent on the Lord Jesus. When we get that right, God will begin to change our lives—deeply—and he will keep on changing them. If the Law could have done the job, we wouldn't have needed the Gospel. Paul said it like this:

"Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in sinful man, in order that the righteous requirements of the law might be fully met in us who do not live according to the sinful nature but according to the Spirit" (Rom. 8:1ff).

That is radical! Paul understood the issues involved in the two competing methodologies of sanctification—Law and Gospel. Can you see the difference in Paul's view and what is in vogue today? In the Evangelical, when we are confronted by a sin problem (be it fornication or prayerlessness), we throw the law at it! But Paul says that what the law was powerless to do, the Gospel does! The Gospel gives us victory over sin—be it fornication or prayerlessness! Why, then, do we continue to hammer people with the Law as if this could change them?

Why Can't the Law Change Us?

For two reasons: First, the Law was not designed to either save or sanctify us. It was designed as a Mighty Hammer to break stony hearts—to show us that we are sinners in the sight of God, sinners in need of the cleansing blood of Jesus Christ and the renewing grace of the Holy Spirit. Paul writes:

Before this faith came, we were held prisoners ("kept in custody," NASB) by the law, locked up until faith should be revealed. So the law was put in charge ("has become our tutor," NASB) to lead us to Christ that we might be justified by faith. Now that faith has come, we are no longer under the supervision of the law. For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ (Gal. 3:23-26).

Before Christ came, Paul says, we were locked up under the Law. It was our "tutor"—Greek, *pedagogue* (παιδαγωγός), literally, "boy-leader." Interestingly, the Roman *pedagogue* was not a teacher (διδάσκαλος), but a slave assigned to watch over a boy's conduct and guide him safely to and from school.² Now that faith has come, we are all (male and female, Jew and Gentile, etc.) sons of God through faith in Christ, and thus not under the *pedagogue*. What? Does this mean we are free to break the law? Of course not! The Law is "holy, righteous and good" (Rom. 7:12). The question is not "should the Law be kept," but "how can we keep it"—and, "how can we promote holiness in ourselves and others?" The answer, Paul says, is by faith, by the Gospel. How sad that we keep insisting that we can perform heart transplants with a hammer! No wonder our patients don't survive!

Second: there is the problem of ability. We aren't able to keep the Law no matter how hard we try! Oh, we can keep most of the commandments in an external manner, but what about our thought life? One might argue from James that we are commanded to keep the Law. "Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like a man who looks at his face in a mirror and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. But the man who looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues to do this, not forgetting what he has heard, but doing it—he will be blessed in what he does." (Jas. 1:22-25) No argument here. Keep the law! Are Paul and James in disagreement, then? Not at all. James is talking about the necessity of keeping the Law; and Paul about how we get the power to live holy lives. One sentence can sum up James and Paul handily: God designed the Law as a mirror to show us our sin but mirrors only show us our faults—they can't fix them.

EFFECTIVE DISCIPLESHIP

If we long to be effective disciples of others, standing in front of them in a pulpit or classroom or sitting room crying out "DON'T!" is not the way. There was a day when living in my home or worshipping in the shadow of my pulpit was more like dwelling at the foot of Mt. Sinai than at the foot of the Cross. Now

God is slowly teaching me how to be a minister of the Gospel. Oh, yes, we should preach the Law, but not in the hopes that it will change people. We should preach it to ourselves and others because it shows us our sin and drives us to Christ. When we preach it in all of its fullness, showing the spiritual character as it demands our perfect love for God and our neighbor, we can then lead the wounded ones to the Cross of Christ. When we are under conviction, then we are eager for the power of the Spirit to produce in us the obedience that we cannot manage on our own—the obedience of faith. We parents, teachers and preachers must never hand the Law down to people unless we follow it with the promise of

God designed the Law as a mirror to show us our sin but mirrors only show us our faults—they can't fix them.

the Gospel. If we stop with Law, we will only harden hearts and stir up more sin. Most sinners already know that what they are doing is wrong. What they need is mothers and fathers and sisters and brothers and pastors and teachers who know how to *apply the Gospel* to their sin—before they are converted and offer! May God give us grace to repent of our misuse of the Law and our neglect of the Gospel. Let's resign from the office of Moses. Will you repent with me?

Sin, is a hungry lion. It eats people. So, if you're out "hunting the lion" that is devouring your flock, get a good weapon. Standing near his lair and crying, "PLEASE, DON'T EAT THEM!" might not be a such a good idea. Jesus defeats sin. Preach the Gospel.



Fig. 7-5 Photo by J.W. Long, Jr.

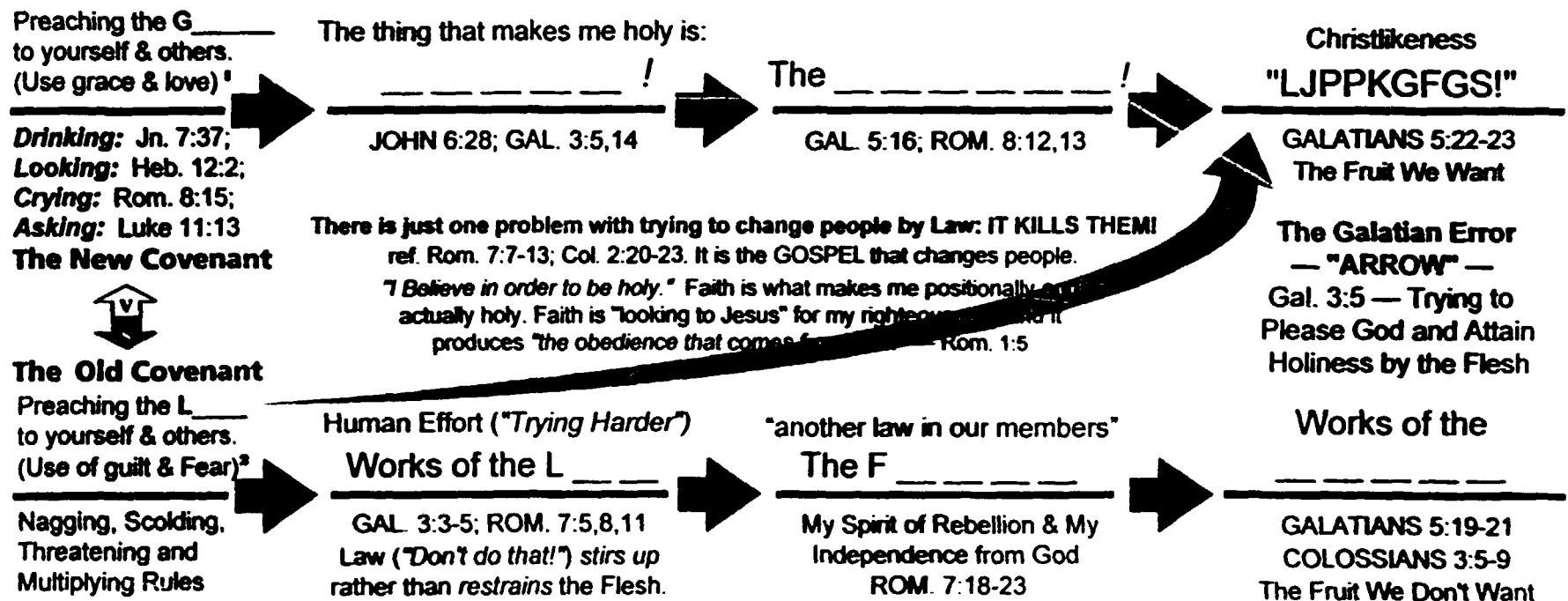
— JWL —

¹ Foster, Richard J. 1978. *The Celebration of Discipline: The Path to Spiritual Growth*. San Francisco, CA: Harper and Row, Publishers.

² Walter, Gingrich, F. Wilbur, and Danker, Frederick W., A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press) 1979.

HOW TO BE CHANGED & LEAD OTHERS TO CHANGE!

OUR GOAL: To glorify God as "Christ is formed in us." (Gal. 4:19; Eph. 1:6,12,14) BUT... HOW DOES THIS HAPPEN?



WHAT IS THE ONE THING YOU SHOULD DO MORE OF TO GROW IN HOLINESS?

Solve the Mystery by Answering the Three Questions Below!

1. In Galatians 5:19a and 5:22a, what *two things* are contrasted?
2. In Galatians 3:1-5, what *two methods* of achieving godliness are contrasted? (also 4:9-11.)
3. What do you think Paul meant when he used the phrase "the obedience that comes from faith" in Romans 1:5?

¹ No! We are not to be "soft on sin" but rely on our relationship with God in the Gospel to fight it! ² Using guilt and threats of punishment produces grudging, outward compliance, not the loving heart obedience we want.

QUOTATIONS FOR THE "HOW TO CHANGE" CHART

Excerpts from: *DYNAMICS OF SPIRITUAL LIFE* by Richard Lovelace, NP, 1979

DR. LOVELACE is Professor Emeritus of the Department of Church History at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary in the USA, and a leading authority on the history of personal and corporate spiritual renewal. In *Dynamics*, he combines solid scholarship and a devotional style to identify as well as trace the features of and hindrances to renewal in the Church from Acts to the present time. Here is a taste:

Lovelace quotes P.T. Forsyth: "It is an item of faith that we are children of God, and there is plenty of experience in us against it!" (P.T. Forsyth, *Christian Perfection*, Dodd, Mead & Company, NY, 1899) Lovelace comments: "The faith that surmounts this 'evidence' and is able to warm itself at the fire of God's love, instead of having to steal love and acceptance from other sources, is actually the root of holiness." Forsyth: "It is a fatal mistake to think of holiness as a possession which we have distinct from our faith... Faith is the very highest form of our dependence on God. We never outgrow it... Whatever other fruits of the Spirit we show, they grow upon faith—faith which is in its nature, repentance... Every Christian experience is an experience of what we have not... We are not saved by the love we exercise, but by the love we trust." — *Dynamics*, p. 213

"In its biblical definition, sin cannot be limited to isolated incidents or patterns of wrongdoing; it is something much more akin to the psychological term 'complex'—an organic network of compulsive attitudes, beliefs and behavior deeply rooted in our alienation from God." Sin originated in the darkening of the human mind and heart as man turned from the truth about God to embrace a lie about Him and consequently a whole universe of lies about Himself, p. 88

"Although the attempt to claim justification without [visible, ongoing] sanctification outrages our consciences, we usually repress this from conscious awareness, and the resulting anxiety and insecurity create compulsive egocentric drives which aggravate the flesh instead of mortifying it. Thus the Protestant disease of cheap grace can produce some of the most selfish and contentious leaders and lay people on earth, more difficult to bear in a state of grace than they would be in a state of nature." — *Dynamics*, pp. 104, 105

"The anesthetic of grace is constantly needed in the healing process of sanctification along with the surgical ministry of the law. For this reason many areas of the church which contain a great deal of [legal] thunder and lightning [Sinai], exposing at least the surfaces of sin, are full of desperately anxious and bitterly contentious people. Law without grace provokes sin—and exposes and aggravates it into some of its ugliest expressions. The counselor [or pastor] who is attempting to move people further in sanctification should therefore begin with a strong emphasis on justification and reiterate this often in the course of his work. Psychoanalysts speak of the "resistance" patients have toward the discovery of traumatic material hidden in the unconscious. The same automatic fear will grip and blind Christian believers unless they are very deeply assured that they are "accepted in the beloved," received by God as if they were perfectly righteous because their guilt is canceled by the righteousness of Christ laid to their account. The human conscience is very deeply disoriented in its conviction that we must have works and sanctification to recommend ourselves to God. We must carry out a very deliberate replacement of this misunderstanding with the awareness that God simply wants honesty, openness and a trusting reliance on Christ our Savior. We cannot bear the light [shining] on our needs unless we are also in the light concerning God's grace to meet those needs." — *Dynamics*, p. 113 (emphasis mine)

Also highly recommended by Richard Lovelace: *Renewal As A Way of Life*, NP, 1985, and which he refers to as "Baby Dynamics."



Fig. 7-6

SANCTIFICATION BY FAITH

A WORKSHOP

INTRODUCTION: Bob Heppe, an evangelist to Hindus, Sikhs, and Muslims based in London says:

"Justification is 100% God's work and involves no human cooperation, but, sanctification involves our ongoing cooperation with God by faith."

STEP ONE

READ the qualities listed below and write J or S before each one for Justification or Sanctification. Then study the quotes below.

- _____ by faith without works (Eph 2: 8-9)
- _____ a declarative act of God the Judge
- _____ an acquittal and acceptance of an enemy (Eph. 2:1-5)
- _____ once and for all at conversion
- _____ an ongoing growth
- _____ the maturing of a son
- _____ counted righteous legally
- _____ no cooperation
- _____ constant cooperation by faith
- _____ inward cleansing and purification
- _____ being gradually transformed into the image of Christ

"SANCTIFICATION IS GROWTH IN CHRISTLIKENESS"

A. THE GROUND OF OUR SANCTIFICATION — ITS ROOT

Sanctification is rooted in the new birth and our justification by faith alone.

Faith unites us to Christ through the Spirit's work and delivers us from the **guilt** (by justification) and **power** of sin (by sanctification).

Through our union with Christ, the Spirit indwells us and becomes the source of power for sanctification through faith. (Ezek. 36:22ff; Gal. 5:16-22; Rom. 7:6; 8:2-16; etc.)

B. THE NATURE OF OUR SANCTIFICATION — ITS VISIBLE FRUIT

Justification occurs the moment we trust in Christ. This is a judicial action by God who acquits us on the basis of faith—faith which is itself a gift. (Eph. 2:8-10)

Justification is immediate, perfect and forever. It includes no cooperation whatsoever from us. (We add nothing.)

Sanctification, however, is ongoing and involves "constant cooperation by faith.

Sanctification can be viewed in three ways:

1. **A STATE** (being "set apart" for God),
2. **A PROCESS** (gradual conformity to the character of Christ), and,
3. **AN EVENT** (a series of conscious choices made to resist sin and imitate Christ as we are sensitive to and "keep in step" with the Holy Spirit). Though we aim at perfect obedience to God's will, our sanctification will never be complete in this life. But we will grow in Christlikeness as we learn to rely *ever more consciously* upon Christ and His work of free justification. There is never any power in the law of God to sanctify us; It can only show us our sin.

Sanctification is only through faith in Christ and His merits. This gives Jesus a Name that is above every Name in the life of the believer.

Sanctification, is strengthened as we rely only on Christ's justification and our union with him. *Such faith releases the Spirit in our lives, enabling us to face up to the deceptions of indwelling sin in ourselves. The Holy Spirit then enables us to . . .*

1. *Put off* our sinful ways and habits, and,
2. *Put on* the love of Christ by faith.

Our FLESH will keep on pulling us toward the idea that we can live our lives in our own strength, but the SPIRIT will keep us repenting of the desire to do it! (the war Paul describes in Gal. 5:16,17)

STEP TWO

WRITE one or two short paragraphs to explain how sanctification works.

(How can the Gospel produce more love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, gentleness, faithfulness, goodness and self control in you?) Try to be clear about the role faith plays in the process of sanctification. In short, how can you become "more holy" as a Christian?

STEP THREE

NOW answer the questions below based on your summary of **SANCTIFICATION BY FAITH.**

A. Does your definition include these five elements: 1. the Spirit, 2. faith (believing), 3. the Flesh (pride, self), 4. the gospel (Christ), and 5. love (holiness)? If one or more of these is missing, then something vital is probably missing in your definition. What is missing—if anything?

B. Did you use any Biblical language that is correct but has no real meaning for you because you either have not thought it through or experienced it in your life? For instance, phrases like, *'Walk in the Spirit'* or *'be filled with the Spirit'*? Vague language or language that is not our own (even though it is very Biblical) may show that we are talking about something we have not really worked out in our lives. *Be tough on yourself.* Is there anything you've written that you don't really understand? Go back to your definition above and *circle any vague word or phrase* you couldn't fully explain to the class.

C. Are all of the steps of sanctification in your definition related to one another in a way that makes sense? These questions below will point you in the right direction and help you evaluate your definition.

- 1) **What is the connection between the Holy Spirit and love?** Gal. 5:22.
- 2) **What is the connection between faith (believing the gospel) and "living in" (or "walking by") by the Holy Spirit?** See: Gal. 3:1-5
- 3) **How does Paul seem to *feel* about his spiritual life as he is writing Romans 7:13-25?**
- 4) **What does his faith lay hold of that enables him to have victory in spite of the struggle he is describing in Rom. 7:13ff?** THINK IT OVER: Faith always has an OBJECT. What is the object—the focus—of our faith? Rom. 3:21-26; Phil. 3:7-10; Gal. 6:14; 3:12; 19, 20.
- 5) **What *method* do churches usually teach these days as to how you should grow in holiness?** (Gal. 3:1-5)
- 6) **Do prayer, Bible study & Quiet Times (the "Spiritual Disciplines") actually produce holiness?** Yes or No? Give a reason for your answer, and tell what value the "Christian disciplines" do have.
- 7) **Now, let's put it all together.** What is the "*petrol*" that causes change in our lives? Or to rephrase, How does believing in your "free justification enable you to love others?

D. Do you see a difference between the *inward process* of sanctification and its *visible results*?

It is easy to confuse these. While we are changing on the inside and becoming more like Christ, we often *feel less holy*. We will be studying this phenomena in S-09, "THE CROSS CHART."

STEP FOUR

REWRITE your definition of Sanctification by Faith. In your "NEW AND IMPROVED" version, use your notes from STEP TWO to guide you.



"LAW & LETTER VS. GOSPEL & SPIRIT"

Sound Advice for Gospel Preachers

"But now we are delivered from the law, so that being dead to that which held us, we should henceforth serve in the newness of Spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter." — Romans 7:6

WITH these two words, "letter" and "spirit," Paul wants to contrast the two kinds of preaching and still more to magnify his office and its benefits against all others who boast of being excellent teachers and mighty in the Spirit. He intentionally speaks like this, not calling these two doctrines by their real names [law and gospel] but giving each a name derived from the kind of work it does. To the Gospel he gives a very glorious name, calling it the ministration of the Spirit. Then, he gives an almost disgraceful name to the Law, as though he would not do it the honor of calling it as "God's Law and commandment"—which it actually is. Later on, in fact, he confesses that the Law was given to Moses and enjoined on the Children of Israel "in great glory."

WHY does Paul speak of the Law in such low terms? Does he call us to despise and refuse to keep the Law of God? Aren't chastity and honesty something admirable, beautiful and holy? Indeed they are! God, in fact, has planted the appreciation of these virtues deep in human reason; they are praised in all the books man writes, and to avoid chaos, the world must be governed by them. St. Paul's one objective here is to beat

by MARTIN LUTHER

down the boasting and pretense of the false preachers and teach them to properly to understand and view the power of his preaching of the Gospel. What Paul is saying is this: If the Jews boast greatly in the Law of Moses—that they have received this law from God written on two tables of stone—and if, similarly, all these [present day] learned and holy preachers of the Law, these judges who boast that they have done and performed so much, what is all of it worth in comparison with the preaching of the Gospel?

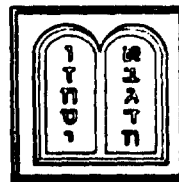


Fig. 7-7

To be sure, it may be fine preaching and good instruction, but it is still nothing more than this! It is merely words—words taught, words spoken, or words written, but it is on these words that the true case will continue to rest:

"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart," and again. "... thy neighbor as thyself"
— Luke 10:27

There is no getting around this! Despite all their talk of "keeping the law," after much time and after much doing and living, nothing worthwhile has been achieved! There is nothing but empty hulls without the peas, and nutshells without the kernels for it is impossible to keep the

Law without Christ! Oh, a man may be forced to put on a pious face for the sake of his reputation or gain or from fear of punishment, but it is only a face.

FOR if God's grace in Christ is not grasped, the heart cannot turn to God, cannot trust Him or have love and delight in His Commandments, but can only resist them! Human nature does not like to be compelled, and no one likes to be a captive in chains! If a man has to bow and submit to the executioner's sword, or to the rod and punishment, his will objects, and he only becomes more angered against the Law. He may obey, but his heart's desire is: *"If only I might freely steal, rob, be greedy and follow my lust!"* And if a man is kept in check by force, he still wishes that there was no Law and no God! So, St. Paul calls the Gospel *"the administration of the Spirit"* in order to show its power—inasmuch as it effects something very different in the hearts of men than the Law brings about. The Gospel brings with it the Holy Spirit and transforms the heart. For if a man who has been driven to terror and anguish by the preaching of the Law hears this preaching, he finds that it does not oppress him with what God requires of him, but of what God has done for him! It points, not to his own works but to Christ's, and invites him to believe and be certain that for the sake of His Son, God will forgive him his sins and will receive him as His child!

IF a man receives and believes this message, it will at

once revive his heart and give him comfort. Then he no longer runs from God, but turns to Him. And, because he finds and feels this grace and mercy of God, he becomes positively drawn toward Him. He now begins to sincerely call upon Him, relate to Him and honor Him as his beloved God. And wonderfully, the more this faith and comfort in Christ are strengthened the more his love for and longing to keep God's Commandments increases! For this reason, God always wants the Word of the Gospel to be preached so that the heart is awakened and he is reminded of God's great grace and goodness! When this happens, the Holy Spirit becomes stronger and stronger in him! Observe, that all of this is not the result of the power of the law, or of the operation of the Law, or of the will of men. It is the effect of a new and heavenly power exerted by the Holy Spirit! The Spirit puts Christ and His works into the heart and makes "a real book" of it—not a book of ink and letters—but of real life and activity. . . (2 Cor. 3:2)

CAN you see now what the difference is between the two kinds of preaching, and why St. Paul praises the preaching of the Gospel and calls it "the administration of the Spirit," but calls the Law nothing but a mere letter? He does this in order to lay low the boasting of the false apostles and preachers who based their boasting on their Judaism and on their "obedience" to the Law of Moses. With their tall talk they told the people,

"Friends, let this Paul preach whatever he pleases. He will, after all, not be able to overthrow Moses, who on Mount Sinai received from God the Law, which is assuredly God's irrevocable commandment

and must be kept if anyone is to be saved."

In the same way the papists. . . and sects are crying out against us in our time,

"What do you mean by preaching so much about faith and Christ? How does this make people any better? Good works must be done!"

It must be granted that such a representation has the appearance of truth—but when you look at it in the light of a closer investigation, it is found to be mere empty words and idle talk.



For, if you want to talk about deeds and works—we already have the Ten Commandments. And, these Ten (as it is well known) we are teaching and instilling in men no less than they are! Moreover, this is all that would be necessary if the commandments could be preached in such a way that they would insure their prompt performance! But the hard question is: Is all this preaching turned into practice—so that it does not remain mere words—or as Paul calls them, "letters"? Is it converted from letters into life and spirit? As to preaching, we are agreed; and no one doubts that the Ten Commandments must be preached—and more—be kept!

But they are not kept! This is our complaint. Therefore something more than merely preaching the Law is required so that a man may also know how he may be enabled to keep it. Otherwise what good does it do to preach that Moses and the Law say:

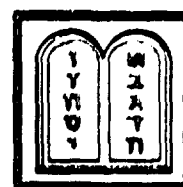
"This thou shalt do, this God requires of thee."

Yes, my dear Moses, I hear what you say; and it is no doubt right and true. But do tell me where am I to get the ability to do what I have unfortunately not done and cannot do. It is not easy to count money from an empty purse or to drink from an empty cup.

Therefore if I am to pay my debts and to quench my thirst, advise me, sir, how to have a full purse and a full cup!

About this these idle talkers can give us no information. On the contrary, they merely continue to urge and torment people with the Law! They lead them to their ruin, leave them in their sins and make a mockery of them.

NONETHELESS, the preaching of the Law is not only necessary, it is the first thing a man must hear.



SOURCE: *What Luther Says: A Practical In-Home Anthology for the Active Christian*, Edited by Ewald M. Plass, Sections 2285, 2286, Concordia, St. Louis, Missouri, 1959 (W 22, 220 f—E 9, 230 f, 236 f—SL12, 845 f, 848, 850 f).

Constant Cooperation by Faith

A 17th Century Nun's Prayer

LORD Thou knowest better than I know myself that I am growing older and will someday be old.

Keep me from the fatal habit of thinking that I must say something on every subject and on every occasion.

Release me from craving to straighten out everybody's affairs.

Make me thoughtful but not moody, helpful but not bossy. With my vast store of wisdom, it seems a pity not to use it all, but Thou knowest Lord that I want a few friends at the end.

Keep my mind free from the recital of endless details; give me wings to get to the point.

Seal my lips on my aches and pains. They are increasing, and love of rehearsing them is becoming sweeter as the years go by. I dare not ask for grace enough to enjoy the tales of other's pains, but help me to endure them with patience.

I dare not ask for improved memory, but for a growing humility and a lessening cocksureness when my memory seems to clash with the memories of others. Teach me the glorious lesson that occasionally I may be mistaken.

Keep me reasonably sweet. I do not want to be a Saint; some of them are so hard to live with, but a sour old person is one of the crowning works of the devil.

Give me the ability to see good things in unexpected places, and talents in unexpected people.

And give me, O Lord, the grace to tell them so.

~ Amen ~

The title of this prayer is traditional & the source unknown.

THE ROLE OF THE SPIRIT IN SANCTIFICATION

A Primer

by John W. Long, Jr.

HOW important is the work of the Holy Spirit in our day to day life and service to Christ? Do we need to depend on the Spirit in a conscious way, or is his work in us automatic? In the world of Evangelicals, there is little debate about the necessity of the Spirit's work in salvation. He regenerates us to life, effectually calls us to Christ, and seals us in Christ (Ephesians 2:15; 1:13). And after that?

The opinions of theologians vary in the extreme. Some suggest that we should not be particularly concerned about the operation of the Spirit. He has given us a new heart, the Scriptures and a new will. Our role is to obey. Full stop. Swinging to the other side of the theological spectrum, there are those with a neurotic preoccupation with, or and over-dependence on the Spirit: couples should seek the "special revelation" of the Spirit from their elders before they marry, or, one should pray about the color of socks he should wear on any given day.

When we assemble the teaching of Jesus and Paul on the work of the Spirit we get a different picture. After our conversion there are two things he does not do: neglect us (as if we did not need his aid), and concern himself with trivialities (like socks). His desire is that we enter into a life of *conscious dependence on the Father for everything*. He is our sanctifier. He produces the character of Christ in us—the fruit of the Spirit. He empowers us to do the work of ministry with special endowments—the gifts of the Spirit.

The letters of Paul virtually shout that we are to be dependent on the work of the Spirit for everything. His role is not to point us to himself, but to Christ (Jn. 15:26). But, we cannot expect success in any endeavor without this Person who indwells us *as the very presence of Christ!*

Before we go on, we should acknowledge two things. First, we need to beware of the bizarre mysticism that passes for Christian spirituality in our day. People make bold claims that the Holy Spirit is leading them to do or say this or that outlandish (sometimes unbiblical)

thing, and then dare us to challenge them. Second, we can be thankful that Spirit does much of his work without our knowledge or cooperation. Were it not for this, given our clumsy, shortsighted leadership, the work of God's Kingdom would grind to a halt. Having said that, the Bible does teach that the Christian

life is a mystical life—a conscious union of the believer with the Father and the Son through the Spirit who inhabits our humble clay and imparts to us supernatural gifts, graces, and abilities.



Fig. 8-2

Consider this litany of the Spirit which moves from imperative to declarative. It begins with the climax to Jesus' "ask, seek, knock" trilogy, and continues in Paul's letters. The prominence given to the work of the Spirit here is, in our view, astonishing, and, sad-to-say, rarely seen in balance in the Evangelical, Reformed and Pentecostal theologies of our day. This list from Jesus and Paul details a few of the vital functions of the Spirit in our everyday lives.

WE ARE TOLD TO...

Ask for the Spirit - Luke 11:13 - "The Father gives to those who ask."

Keep in step with the Spirit - Gal. 5:25b - "march in step" - *σπουδένω*

Walk in the Spirit - Gal. 5:16 - "walk" - *περιπατέω*

Pray always in the Spirit - Eph. 2:28 - access to; 6:18 pray in

Be filled with the Spirit - Eph. 5:18 - filled - *πληροῦσθε*

Put to death the misdeeds of the body by the Spirit - Rom. 8:13

And, know the fellowship of the Spirit. - 2 Cor. 13:14; Phil. 2:1 - *κοινωνία*



WHY? BECAUSE WE...

Live by the Spirit - Gal. 5:25a - *Εἰ ζῶμεν πνεύματι...*

Cry "Abba-Father!" by the Spirit - Rom. 8:15 - *ἐν ᾧ κρῖζομεν...* (Instrumentality)

Are to be led by the Spirit - Rom. 8:14 - *ἀγω* - to lead—as taking by the hand

Are to "sow" to the Spirit rather than the flesh - Gal. 6:8

Are to have our minds set on the Spirit - Rom. 8:6,9 (NIV has "controlled by")

Are to bear the fruit of the Spirit - Gal. 5:22, 23

And, are to serve using the gifts of the Spirit. - Rom 12:6ff; 1 Cor. 12:4ff; Eph. 4:8ff



THE Biblical evidence is overwhelming. The Holy Spirit has a hand in every aspect of our Christian lives. After he raises us from death to life (regeneration), he gifts us with saving faith (for justification). He then seals us in Christ (sealing) and, since he is the "Spirit of sonship," begins crying "ABBA-FATHER!" in our hearts (adoption). But with all that, his work has just begun! Our growth in holiness (sanctification) and our ability to bring glory to God through our lives and ministries demand our constant, conscious cooperation with Christ by faith. This energizes our lives with the life of God by what Paul calls *ἡ διακονία τοῦ πνεύματος* — the ministry of the Spirit.

"You yourselves are our letter, written on our hearts, known and read by everybody. You show that you are a letter from Christ, the result of our ministry, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone, but on tablets of human hearts... vs. 6 He has made us competent as ministers of a new covenant—not of the letter but of the Spirit, for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life. Now if the ministry that brought death which was engraved in letters on stone, came with glory, (the Law), . . . will not the ministry of the Spirit be even more glorious? If the ministry that condemns men is glorious (The Law), how much more glorious is the ministry that brings righteousness (the Spirit)." — 2 Cor. 3:3, 6-8 NIV

Now that the Spirit has come, the Law of God does not keep us as prisoners any longer. We are free—free to obey by his power. Under the Old Covenant, we had no hope whatsoever of keeping the Law. The externals, yes, but living up to the Royal Law of Love—perfect love to God and our neighbor? Never! In this age, we serve *"in the new way of the Spirit, and not in the old way of the written code."* (Rom. 7:6) And the fruit of the indwelling and empowering Holy Spirit in us is love. So, Paul reminds us,

"He who loves his neighbor has fulfilled the whole law." – Romans 13:10

Praise God for the ministry of the Holy Spirit, his promised gift, without whose indwelling presence and power the New Testament standard of holiness would mock us—rather than encourage and instruct us!

Finally, let's ask ourselves some questions: (1) Honestly, how do our doctrine and experience line up with what the New Testament teaches about our need to consciously and constantly appropriate the ministry of the Holy Spirit? (2) **Pentecostals:** Could it be that you have focused so intensely on the *charismata* that like the Corinthians you have missed out on the first concern of the Spirit—your sanctification? **Orthodox, Evangelical and Reformed:** Is it possible that we have been so cold and resistant to the ministry of the Spirit that we have forfeited his power to minister? (3) **For us all:** Don't we need to admit that we are fallible and may not have all the answers? Shouldn't we go to the Father and ask him for the necessary faith and understanding to receive the full benefits of the New Covenant ministry of his Spirit?

— JWL —

THE NORMAL CHRISTIAN LIFE

Living in the Spirit for
My Father's Glory

J.W. Long, Jr. SONSHIP for Africa
Pg. 8-3

2
PRODUCES...



1
WHEN
YIELDED
TO...



"Yielding" is not natural. Being self-willed is. But Jesus calls us to die to self and live in conscious dependence on him by faith. (Lk. 9:32; Jn. 15)

CHOOSE YOUR PATH
BEGIN
HERE!



SONSHIP — a relationship not religion

By faith, the Holy Spirit ("the Spirit of sonship") joins me to Christ and to my "Abba-Father!" — Romans 8:15

Gal. 4:4-6 - As I listen to the Spirit crying "Abba-Father" in me...

Rom. 8:14-16 - by the Spirit, I answer back, "Abba-Father!"

Gal. 6:14 + Cor. 12:9 - I boast in the cross & my weakness.

Heb. 12:1 - I "keep my eyes fixed" on Jesus my Savior.

My flesh is always pulling me below this line, and the Spirit is calling me to live above it by faith

1 GAL 3:3 - BY DEPENDING ON MY
"REDEEMED FLESH"...

(which comes naturally)

I begin relying on —

- my own will power to keep the law...
- external pressures to make me "obey." (sic)...
- and my "Gift Package" —

instead of the Spirit—to do ministry
AND, by "trying harder" in the flesh...



3
AND GOOD
WORKS SO
THAT...

The Fruit
of the Spirit
"LJPPKGFGS"
Gal. 5:22

"GOSPEL WALKING" — Col. 2:6

1. LEFT FOOT: I ADMIT IT -

"I am a Big Sinner!"

2. RIGHT FOOT: I LOOK TO HIM -

"I have a Big Savior!"



GOD GETS THE GLORY!

Ezek. 36:23; Eph. 1:6,12,14

Rom. 1:5 - "the obedience of faith"

Gal. 5:6 "faith working through love"

John 15:1-11 "Abide in me = fruit."

Psalms 51:10 a "repentant walk"

The Spiritual GIFTS Operate Properly!

A New Age of the Spirit Promised - Ezek. 36:26; Jn. 14:15ff; 16:5ff. Fulfilled - Acts 2:1ff. So now we: Live by the Spirit... ask for the Spirit... walk by the Spirit... are led by the Spirit... are controlled by the Spirit... pray in the Spirit... keep in step with the Spirit... sow to please the Spirit... serve in the new way of the Spirit... put to death the flesh by the Spirit... and, manifest the fruit of the Spirit as we do ministry using the gifts of the Spirit! Spirit Life!

FOR WHICH...

3 I GET THE GLORY! (a fleshly goal)

"Trying-Harder-Holiness" (Gal. 3:3)

New Year's Resolution Christianity

"The more I try to change—the more I stay the same"

1. I DETERMINE: to have a "Quiet Time," to love an enemy, not to lust or lie or gossip—whatever. THEN...

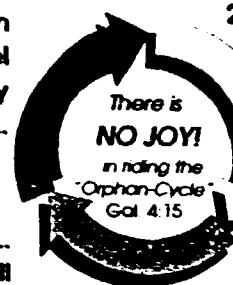
6. Then I feel guilty so...

5. But... I still fail!

4. So... I TRY EVEN HARDER!

2. I try REALLY HARD!

3. But, it's not easy.



Life in the Spirit

"And so we serve in the new way of the Spirit, and not in the old way of the written code."

— Romans 7:6

Luke 11:13 - ask for John 7:37ff - promise of Rom. 8:15 - cry Abba by Rom. 7:6 - serve by Rom. 8:13 - kill flesh by Gal. 5:16 - walk by Gal. 5:25 - march to Gal. 5:18 - be led by Gal. 6:6 - sow to please Eph. 2:18; Ju. 20 - pray in Eph. 5:18 - be filled with Eph. 4:8ff - use gifts of



"Keeping in Step with the Spirit"

Walking With Christ In the Obedience of Faith



"Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit." — Gal. 5:25

INTRODUCTION: What do the familiar Biblical commands like "walk in the Spirit," "live by the Spirit," and "keep in step with the Spirit" mean in our daily lives?

The purpose of this lesson is to use **FIVE FACTS** to translate them into very simple, practical ways of thinking and acting.

FACT ONE

THE NORMAL CHRISTIAN LIFE IS TO BE AN ABUNDANT LIFE AS A RESULT OF OUR BEING FILLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT.

Jesus said: "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. He that believes in me... from within him shall flow rivers of living water." "I have come that you might have life, and have it abundantly." — John 7:38-39; 10:10b

A. ALL CHRISTIANS ARE INDWELT BY THE HOLY SPIRIT AND AS A RESULT...

We should be manifesting the **FRUIT** of the Holy Spirit.

- ☐ "LJPPKGFGS"— "Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control"—evidences of the Spirit's presence. — Gal. 5:22

We should also have the **POWER** to overcome . . .

- ☐ Feelings of loneliness, stress, fear of people, and the future. — 1 Jn. 4:18
- ☐ Unbreakable habits like selfishness, depression, impatience, gossip, sexual lust, gluttony, hot temper. — 1 Cor. 6:9-11

We should also be growing....

- ☐ In a daily awareness of the Father's love for us
 - ☐ In faith in His promises to you, and his care over us
 - ☐ In believing that he is good and that he only means to do us good. Beware! Satan loves to attack here—especially when you or those you love are suffering trials.
- STORY:** A pastor's wife in the USA tell about a doctor (surgeon) who was rock climbing with his ten year-old son. The son fell and was so seriously injured that the father had to do surgery on the spot. "Will it hurt me?" the son asked. "Son," the father replied, "I may hurt you, but I will never harm you."

B. SINCE ALL BELIEVERS HAVE THE SPIRIT WHY ARE WE NOT ALWAYS FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT?

The reason is that we don't always walk by the Spirit. Why don't we?
WE DO NOT WALK BY THE SPIRIT BECAUSE . . .

FACT TWO

WE ARE QUITE BLIND TO HOW WEAK AND SINFUL WE REALLY ARE.

We may have thought we were too weak to be holy, but our real problem is that we are too strong, independent, self-reliant and blind to our sin!

Since we don't know how weak we are, we make the mistake of trying to live the Christian life in our own strength! Come now... Are we really that bad? Let's find out. When we understand this, we'll really see the need for "walking in the Spirit!"

Paul says that we have a 'monster' inside of us called "the flesh." (Greek - σαρκ- "sinful nature" in the NIV. Paul mentions it some twenty-two times. (Gal. 5:13, 16, 17ff. etc.) In fact, Paul describes the Christian life as a WARFARE, a CONTEST between the flesh and the spirit. For example:

For the sinful nature (flesh) desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other, so that you do not do what you want. — Gal. 5:17

Our "flesh" is that totally selfish, radically self-centered, God-allergic part of us. The flesh is ugly and powerful, but we need help to see it. Why? Because it is so much a part of us that it blinds us to its presence and activity.

FOUR "FLESH TESTS" to help us detect our sinful nature at work —

- 1 FLESH TEST: When was the last time you did something good and didn't tell anyone else about it, have the urge to tell someone about it? Interesting.
- 2 FLESH TEST: Do you remember the "Tongue Assignment" from S-1? (p. 1-31) Have you been able to keep it? Not too well. The reason is the power of the flesh.

To refresh your memory, here is the notorious "TONGUE ASSIGNMENT" again.

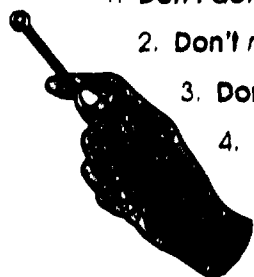


Fig. 8-4

1. Don't defend yourself no matter what happens. (Admit it when you are wrong.)
2. Don't make excuses for your sins or failures. ("I may be wrong!")
3. Don't talk someone down—even in prayer. (Focus on your own sins.)
4. Don't repeat a matter of gossip. (Gossip: "confessing someone else's sins.")
5. Don't boast. (except in your weaknesses or failures)
6. Don't complain about anything. (No complaining against God for the painful circumstances he has sovereignly willed for your life.)

Our tongue is like a spiritual thermometer that takes the temperature of our soul. If we are not walking in the Spirit, our tongue will quickly show it—either by what we say (such as, "Hey, it's your problem; you suffer with it!")—or refuse to say (such as, "I have sinned against you; will you please forgive me?").

Paul had to write to Christians who were "biting and devouring one another"

in the church (Gal. 5:15). One only needs to read the local newspaper to see that right up to today, things have not changed very much. "Christian Cannibals" and "Flesh Monsters" still infest our churches. Even we people who wrote the Tongue Assignment can't keep it!

- 3 FLESH TEST:** How would you feel if you had a "Daily Journal" that contained a record of *everything you had ever thought, said or done*, and you realized you had left it on a bench in your church?

DISCUSS: Imagine that the person who discovered it thought it was so interesting that he called together a group of twelve other members of your church that very afternoon to give it a really thorough reading! Describe what events might follow?

YOUR NOTES:

- 4 FLESH TEST:** Even though you have tried and tried to get victory over some besetting sin, you are no nearer victory than before. You still do it—perhaps every day. Why are we so powerless to change? Here's a hint:

We feel powerless because we are powerless, and "trying harder" is not the solution.

FOR EXAMPLE: Suppose I begin to realize that I really do not love the people in my life who do not make me feel good. What do I do about it? Do I...

Step 1: try hard to love these difficult people and *pretend* to be kind to them?

Step 2: then begin avoiding them when this becomes too hard? (Anyway, when I have to be with them I get angry and then feel worse about myself!)

Step 3: but, since I know this isn't right, return to Step 1 and try again.

Don't you find it odd that we keep trying the same tactics our whole Christian lives—and without any success? One would think we would try something else! How can I be delivered from the terrible power of my flesh? Paul asked—and then answered—the same question in his "Oh wretched man!" plea in Romans 7:24!

FACT

THREE

GOD'S SOLUTION TO THE FLESH IS THE GOSPEL!

That's right! And you thought the gospel was just to get you to heaven! No, the Gospel is even better news than that. It is also the *power for life!* Really? Yes!

HEAR THIS: The flesh will never be overcome by trying—only by believing. This is a truth that we will reinforce in your heart by repeating it over and over again in SONSHIP.

The thing that can empower you to live your new life in Christ is *believing the same Gospel that saved you!* Does this sound simplistic? How can it work?

IT WORKS BY THE...

FOUR BLESSINGS THE GOSPEL GIVES US (that the Law could never provide)

1. **CLEANSING!** We are not only forgiven, but righteous. Because of Jesus' atoning death on the cross, when God the Father looks at us (*regarding righteousness*) we look like his Son! *The Gospel delivers a one-two punch against sin!*

- a. The Gospel cancels the debt of our sin and so removes the wrath of God due to us for our sins. Jesus "paid the overdraft" in our bank account. And...

- b. Through the Gospel, Jesus transferred into our bankrupt account, all of the righteousness he earned by His perfect obedience to the law of His Father—thus filling up our account with a supply of righteousness which can never be depleted.

2. SONSHIP! We are sons and daughters of God—brothers and sisters of Jesus.

That means that we can call God, "Abba-Father!" (Gal. 4:6-8; Rom. 8:15,16)
Hebrews 2:11 "Both the one who makes men holy and those who are made holy are of the same family. So Jesus is not ashamed to call us brothers!" (so, co-heirs)

3. PARTNERSHIP! We are filled with the Holy Spirit of Jesus and the Spirit gives us "fellowship with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ!"

(Greek: κοινωνία, koinonia, fellowship/partnership) Part of the Spirit's work every day is to move us from feeling and acting like "orphans" into feeling and acting like "sons!" (Jn. 14:18) Spiritual "orphans" (Review S-01) want to be independent of outside control, manage their own lives, and live for their own glory.

The Spirit is continually working to change our desires. He wants to keep renewing our minds so that we desire what Jesus, God's perfect Son desired—to please his Father and bring him glory.

4. POWER! We have died with Christ, risen with Him, and the promised Holy Spirit is dwelling in us! Sin is no longer our master. We are "Under New Management!" (Rom. 6:14; 7:4 & 6; 8:13) Gal. 2:19,20) The Spirit gives us power to be different.

But, how can I experience these blessings more fully? How can I grow in holiness and in my loving obedience to Jesus? Here is the answer:

"But walk in the Spirit, and you will not fulfill the desires of the flesh." — Gal. 5:16

Do you agree? Do you see that if you are "walking by the Spirit" the flesh can be conquered? Can you see that this is the way to obedience in the Christian life? (Since the only alternative is walking in the flesh, I don't think we need to argue the point!)

So now the question has become: HOW DO I WALK BY THE SPIRIT?

**FACT
FOUR**

TO "WALK BY THE SPIRIT," KEEP BELIEVING THE GOSPEL!

WHAT does it mean to "walk?" Think about it. First, you take a step by putting the left foot out in front of the right one. Then, you put your right foot in front of the left or e—left foot, right foot. Now, do it again, and again. VOILÁ! Now, you are walking!

In Colossians 2:6, Paul tells us that the Christian life is "walking in Jesus" just as we did when we first received him.

THINK: What were the two steps you took when you received Jesus as Savior?

(1) You repented of your sin (left foot), and then, (2) You believed the promise that Christ died for your sins (right foot).

"Walking in the Spirit," "walking in Jesus," and "keeping in step with the Spirit" are just different terms for the same faith-action. This "walk" is our "engine"—the way we grow as Christians and the source of our power to serve God. (Paul called this "the obedience that comes from faith." — Rom. 1:5)

CAUTION: You may have been assuming that to be "*mature*" you must "walk on" from the basics of the Gospel to other things—like studying theology, doing evangelism, works of mercy, etc. Without a doubt, these are good things and we recommend them highly! But understand that they will not necessarily make you mature in Christ or grow in holiness. They will do so only if they cause you to seek Jesus and the power of his Spirit in communion with and out of love for him. Holiness is first a heart-condition, and only then, activity. Heart-holiness produces visible fruit, or it isn't holiness. But don't confuse the fruit and the root. The root of holiness is faith in Christ. Exercising faith gives us the Spirit, and the Spirit produces the fruit—new life. Activities that we assume will make us grow may actually lead us in the opposite direction—into spiritual pride and boasting in what we've done! (1 Cor. 3:10ff) Jerry Bridges reminds us that we need to daily "*breathe the atmosphere of the Gospel.*" (It might be helpful to review his article, *The Compelling Power of Love* in the Introduction to SONSHIP section, p. 0-7.)

To Reiterate: "Walking in Jesus" involves a constant repetition of the two simple steps you took when you were converted: **LEFT FOOT (Repent) — RIGHT FOOT (Believe).**

We know what you are thinking — that this "walking" sounds too simple, too easy, right? You couldn't be more wrong. This may be simple, but you will find it anything but easy. Your flesh will see to that. Why? Because in the moment you are exposed as a sinner (you know it in your heart, or other people discover it in public), the *hardest* thing in the world to do is to *believe the Gospel*, and the *easiest* thing to do is "what comes naturally"—try to cover it up, excuse yourself, or shift the blame to someone else. (We will look at this again in S-9.)

Most of us are such experts at fleshly behavior (I am), that we don't even realize we're doing it. In a word, spiritual growth is learning to see these machinations of the flesh, take them to Christ and repent of them — which brings us back to "walking."

Specifically, how does "walking" in the Spirit work? How do I do it? Suppose you are going through your daily routine and it suddenly occurs to you that you are being very impatient with a member of your family. You have said cruel things and caused them to feel badly. Now what do you do? How do you react to the exposure of your sin? You see that you have been cruel—that you are a cruel person. That things are more important than loving relationships to members of your own family! Do you say to yourself,

"Oh no! The Bible tells me not to be angry so I must try not to be angry and to forgive!"
Or, "Oh no! I got angry. But surely I can't be that bad! It must be their fault somehow!"
"Surely God would not expect for me to stand still and let them act like that!"

Is that the way of the Gospel? Hardly. Rather than trying hard to stop, try looking at Jesus! What does that mean?



FIRST STEP: LEFT FOOT — REPENT — Admit that you are a sinner.

NOT ONLY HAVE YOU "BROKEN A RULE" (In this case, "Be angry and sin not.") and failed to manifest the fruit of the Spirit (patience), you find it impossible to love sinners the way Jesus did. You just don't have it in you. (None of us does.) You need the Spirit. (All of us do.) The problem: you see everybody but yourself as a sinner.

1 John 1:8-9 was written to believers. "If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess (Greek: "keep on confessing") our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness."

Yes, but, in a very practical way, how does the Gospel come to the rescue?

Just believe!!! AGREE with everything you've read in "FACT TWO." (p. 58-6)

Agree with God's assessment of your sin. Be honest. Be specific. Go to the root of it. Ask the Holy Spirit to show you your *root sins*. Think of the ugly roots that produce the bitter fruits—the *surface sins* that embarrass you when they "pop out" and people see them. What "root sins?" Things like our stubborn commitment to ourselves, idolizing and protecting ourselves from criticism, our love of praise, and our desire to control the people and circumstances of our lives so that we always get our way.

It is these roots that "sprout and grow up" to produce our many failures to love and serve God and others in selfless ways. Don't just cut the grass, dig up the roots!

REPENT! Paul wrote...

2 Corinthians 7:9-10 *"I am happy now—not because you were made sorry, but because your sorrow led you to repentance. For you became sorrowful as God intended and so were not harmed in any way by us. Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death."*

MEDITATE on the Cross of Christ. His blood was split for this sin. Hate and grieve over what it did to Jesus, how it hurts others and alienates you from loving relationships with God and others.



SECOND STEP: RIGHT FOOT — BELIEVE — Run to Jesus and give him your sin.

RUN TO HIM: Where is your Saviour this moment? Gaze on him! Fix your eyes on him! Receive his gift of righteousness. How can I do that? What is he doing?

Romans 8:33,34 *"Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. Who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus, who died—more than that, who was raised to life and is at the right hand of God interceding for us."*

Hebrews 7:24,25 *"Because Jesus lives forever, He has a permanent priesthood. Therefore he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them."*

FIX YOUR EYES ON HIM! He is always "on duty" at the right hand of the Father!

WHY IS HE THERE? So that he can "make you beautiful" to the Father as he cleanses you by his blood, and clothes you in his righteousness. *Therefore —*

Hebrews 10:19-22 *"Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water."*

BELIEVE WHAT THE GOSPEL SAYS about your status as a loved son! As you keep on repeating these two very simple "steps"—left foot (Repent: "I am a great sinner."), right foot, (Believe: "I have a great Saviour!"), you will be amazed at the power of simple faith in Jesus to change you deeply. Brothers and sisters, there is no other way to become holy than by the Gospel!

Search for the "ROCKET FUEL" of spiritual growth in this Prayer of Paul:



Ephesians 3:14-19 *"For this reason I kneel before the Father, from whom his whole family in heaven and on earth derives its name. I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power together with all the saints, to grasp (What?) how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God."*

Now, read slowly through the prayer again. Can you find the "leverage points"—the things Paul knows have the power to change us? What are they? Look for the Spirit and faith in the Gospel of God's love. Do you understand why? Is this making sense?

YOUR NOTES:

Fig. 8-5

DO YOU KNOW that at the end of his life, the Apostle Paul thought of himself as a bigger sinner than when he was converted?

1 Timothy 1:15 *"Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the worst."*

Was Paul really worse? No, from the point of view of all who saw him, he was actually better, that is, he sinned less and loved more. But since he had matured in his understanding of what sin was (failure to love God perfectly, and others as Jesus loved), he was *much more sensitive* to his sin.

Didn't that make him miserable? Not at all. He had more joy because he had a much bigger view of his need for Jesus and God's forgiving love for him. (Rom. 7:25)

This is the Luke 7:47 principle we will study in S-9: *"He who has been forgiven much, loves much, but he who has been forgiven little, loves little."*

So, don't be afraid of being exposed as a sinner! Don't fight it. The more you see of your sin, the more you can repent of it, and the more joy and freedom from the bondage of sin you will have.

WHY IS FAITH IN CHRIST SO POWERFUL? Because it releases the power of the Spirit in our lives. The Holy Spirit fills and empowers those who exercise Gospel faith. **We grow by believing—not by doing.** And, let us repeat it: hopefully we will find that ministry activities (such as evangelism and teaching) will further our growth. But if they do, it will be *because they stimulated us to exercise faith in Christ.*

Galatians 3:2ff — *"Did you receive the Spirit (at first) by observing the law, or by believing what you heard? (the Gospel) ... Does God keep giving you his Spirit... because you observe the law, or because you believe what you heard?"* (See the R. L. Dabney quote on the "mother graces" in S-10 — page 10-8, C.)

Is faith easy? No. As we have said, although faith is simple, it is rarely (if ever) easy. The pull of our flesh makes believing the Gospel hard. Unbelief feels a lot more natural to the flesh than faith—thus our frequent lapses into unbelief. And Satan is always ready to lend the flesh aid. First he tempts us, draws us away from Christ, and then accuses us of unbelief!

FACE THE FACT: Sometimes our faith will be weak and we will feel like orphans.

It happens to me. Often. What do I do then? When it finally dawns on me what is wrong (and sometimes it takes awhile), I may resist the thought that I am such a needy mess and that I am in this state again! SOMETIMES I ask people to pray for me (the best course) but I am proud, so I usually try to hide my weakness.

BUT... eventually, I do the "GOSPEL WALK" — I look at my sin, face it, REPENT (Left Foot), and then take it to Jesus in faith, BELIEVE (Right Foot).

THEN, at some point, I drift into self-centeredness and get "orphaned out" again, and, do the Gospel Walk again. (Some people teach a perfectionism that denies this cycle in the Christian life. My view on that? Read the first paragraph at the bottom of page S1-18 again.) My experience, and the experience of those who are open and honest in fellowship with me is that orphanhood can overtake us in a heartbeat.

PRAISE GOD he never gets tired of us! (He has been loving weak people for quite a number of years!) So, let us take courage from his long-suffering love, seek his face, and enter into the richness of his promises to us instead of being held captive to our negative feelings!

FACT

FIVE

"WALKING BY THE SPIRIT" IS THE KEY TO OUR NEW LIFE IN CHRIST.

When we "keep in step with the Spirit," the Christian life ceases to be something we have to live on our own. We are in a partnership with God, carrying out God's plans, on God's timetable, drawing on God's wisdom and energy—all for God's purpose—his honor and glory.

YOUR NOTES AND OBSERVATIONS:

YOUR QUESTIONS FOR CLASS DISCUSSION:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Small Groups: "A Walking in the Spirit Workshop" (may be done as homework)
(pages S8-12-S8-16)



A WALKING IN THE SPIRIT WORKSHOP

INTRODUCTION: To keep things simple, . . . here are just four aspects of life that will be powerfully affected as we walk (or don't walk) by the Spirit: Identity, Warfare, Love, and Ministry. The order here is, we believe, important. Can you discern why? Think especially about why Identity comes before the rest, and Love before ministry?

YOUR RESPONSE (be ready to discuss)

Why is IDENTITY placed before WARFARE, LOVE AND MINISTRY? —

Why is LOVE before MINISTRY? —

NOW, put on your "thinking cap" and get ready to grapple with these four areas. Write brief notes to share with the class on how you think walking in the Spirit might specifically affect your daily life in each area.

A. IDENTITY (knowing who we are) Walking by the Spirit enables us to live in our new identity as God's sons or daughter. The Gospel, not our sin, defines us.

1. How might walking by the Spirit affect the way you think about and relate to the Father?

2. How might walking by the Spirit affect our daily relationships with others—especially with the members of our own family? (Give examples)

B. WARFARE (against the world, the flesh, and the devil)

1. Think about **YOUR OWN FLESH**. Why might it be important to deal with our own sin before moving into the lives of others to disciple them? (Think of some specific sin you once did or are now struggling with.)

2. Should we be “perfect” (completely victorious) before we help others?
If not, at what level do we need to be?

3. What should be our *attitude* and *manner* as we seek to lift up others and who have fallen or are struggling to fight their spiritual battles? Imagine how you would counsel a Christian who has come to you to confess that they have fallen into sexual sin. Summarize what your approach would be:

- a.
- b.
- c.
- d.

C. LOVE (obedience to the Royal Law) Walking by the Spirit gives us the FRUIT of the Spirit so that we manifest the character of Christ and love God and others as we love ourselves.

1. How might daily walking in the Spirit help you in the secret place of your own heart to deal with the memories of people who have hurt you, or people that you happen to be in some conflict with? Write out your counsel to yourself—remembering WHAT walking in the Spirit IS: (2 steps)

2. What is the connection of “repentant faith” to love?

3. What is the connection of “repentant faith” to your joy on a daily basis?

D. MINISTRY Walking by the Spirit is what keeps the GIFTS of the Spirit from becoming exercises in self-aggrandizement. (as in the Corinthian church)

1. IMAGINE that you have been elected as the leader of the Worship Team of your church—quite an honor—and a temptation to soak up lots and lots of glory as you are up in front of people!

- a. How might walking in the Spirit affect the way you sing and play an instrument while you are “on stage?” (Think of what you are thinking in your heart.)

b. As Worship Team Leader, how will your dependence on the Holy Spirit affect your attitude, words and actions in relating to the other members of the team?

c. How will your knowledge of what it means to walk in the Spirit and the need to rely on the energy of the Spirit to do ministry affect the way you act and counsel the other members of the team as you minister together?

d. Write out a sample prayer you might pray as you begin a time of rehearsal for the Sunday Morning worship service.

2. IMAGINE that you are the pastor of an affluent suburban church with 700 registered members. Your attendance has been 1,000 for the past three Sundays, and you have had what seem to be 250 genuine professions of faith. Last Sunday, the offering was so large that the four deacons who were counting it fainted when they saw it. . .

a. You are at a Tuesday morning pastor's prayer breakfast. The first six pastors who have stood to share and ask for prayer are all working in slum churches in the poorest neighborhoods. They are hurting.

NOW IT IS YOUR TURN TO SHARE:

1) What will you share if you are walking in the FLESH, and how might it affect the spirit of the meeting and the six hurting men?

2) What will you share and what will you suggest for the rest of the agenda if you are walking in the SPIRIT?

b. A woman who you noticed has kept looking at her watch as your Sunday sermons have approached one hour in length meets you at the door and complains about the length of the service.

1) How will you feel toward her and answer her if you are walking in the FLESH?

2) How will you feel toward her and answer her if you are walking in the SPIRIT?

CONCLUSION

When we walk in the Spirit, we will be given the ability to love and serve God, our neighbor, and even our enemies with extraordinary grace and love.

And, when we have loved, we will have kept the whole law. THAT IS POWERFUL!
(Can you imagine what it must have been like to live under the Old Covenant?)

REVIEW OF THE LESSON

FACT ONE: THE NORMAL CHRISTIAN LIFE IS TO BE AN ABUNDANT LIFE AS A RESULT OF OUR BEING FILLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT. But we don't often experience that promised life of abundance because we aren't always filled with the Spirit, and we aren't always filled with the Spirit because we don't often walk in the Spirit, and we don't feel the need to walk in the Spirit because...

FACT TWO: WE ARE QUITE BLIND TO HOW WEAK AND SINFUL WE REALLY ARE.

FACT THREE: GOD'S SOLUTION TO THE FLESH IS THE GOSPEL! The Gospel is not just the thing that gets us to heaven, it is the power for living the Christian life!

FACT FOUR: TO "WALK BY THE SPIRIT," KEEP BELIEVING THE GOSPEL! And, to believe the Gospel, we keep taking the two steps we took when we first received Christ—repent, believe. (*Our inability to love will keep us plenty busy in the repenting department!*)

FACT FIVE: "WALKING BY THE SPIRIT" IS THE KEY TO OUR NEW LIFE IN CHRIST. "Maturity" does not come by learning more, or by throwing yourself into many new activities. It comes by "walking" with Christ—in a conscious dependence on him.

FACT SIX: NONE OF THOSE FIVE IS OF ANY VALUE AS LONG AS THEY STAY ON THIS PAGE!

SO... Now what?

Let's start walking! Are you ready?

Galatians 5:25 "Since we *live*¹ by the Spirit, let us *keep in step*² with the Spirit."

 LEFT FOOT ① REPENT of your sin! Admit your guilt! <i>"Father! Here I am and I am guilty! I am a big sinner!"</i>	 ② RIGHT FOOT BELIEVE the Gospel! <i>"Jesus! You died for me! Here I am! I receive your perfect righteousness again!"</i>
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Now, keep walking –

***LEFT FOOT, RIGHT FOOT,
LEFT FOOT, RIGHT FOOT...***

¹ ζῶ (to live, breathe, have life...) Here the present tense, "keep living, stay alive."

² ἀκολουθεῖτε (to march in military step, left-right-left-right) Here the present tense, "keep marching!"

How Spiritual Growth Looks & Feels

"The Cross Chart"

The Context of Holiness Is Justification Through Jesus Christ.

God's free gift of justification (the pardon and acceptance here and now through Christ's perfect obedience culminating in his substitutionary sin bearing for us on the cross) is the basis on which the entire sanctifying process rests. It is our union by the Spirit, through faith, with the Christ who died for us and whom first we trust for justification. ¹ that our subsequent life of holiness is lived. ² Holy people glory, not in their holiness, but in Christ's cross: for the holiest saint is never more than a justified sinner and never sees himself in any other way.

John Bradford, considered by those who knew him as the saintliest of the English Reformers, constantly described himself when signing his letters as a hard-hearted sinner. One Puritan in his last illness testified: "Never did I so feel my need of the blood of Christ—and never was I enabled to make such good use of it." John Wesley on his deathbed was heard to whisper: "No way into the holiest but by the blood of Jesus." It looks as if Paul himself as he advanced in years, and presumably in holiness too, grew downward into an increasingly vivid and humbling sense of his own unworthiness: for whereas in 1 Corinthians (c. 54 A.D.) he called himself the least of the apostles and in Ephesians (c. 61 A.D.) the very least of all the saints, in 1 Timothy (c. 65 A.D.) he describes himself as the foremost of sinners (see 1 Corinthians 15:9, Ephesians 3:8; 1 Timothy 1:15). (¹ Rom. 3:5; ² Rom. 6:8)

This may, of course, be reading too much into three isolated phrases: yet...it is the most natural thing in the world for a Christian at any time to see himself as the foremost of sinners, so the apostle's phrase should cause us no surprise. Why is this a natural judgment for any Christian to pass on himself? Just because he knows the inside story of his own life—the moral defeats, hypocrisies, lapses into meanness, pride, dishonesty, envy, lust, exploitative thinking, and cowardice at motivational levels, and all the rest of his private shame—in a way that he does not know the inside story of anyone else. Increase in holiness means, among other things, an increased sensitivity to what God is, and hence a clearer estimate of one's own sinfulness and particular shortcomings, and hence an intensified realization of one's constant need of God's pardoning and cleansing mercy. *All growth in grace is growth downward in this respect.*

We need, then, to remember that any ideas of self-satisfied or self-righteous holiness or of a divinely imparted righteousness that in any way reduces our need for Christ's imputed righteousness are delusive and ungodly will-o'-the-wisps. They are, indeed, contradictions in terms. The correct name for them is Pharisaism; they are not in any sense Christian holiness.

J. I. Packer, *Keep in Step With The Spirit*, 1984, Fleming H. Revell, Old Tappan, NJ, pp. 105-106 (emphasis mine).

THE PARADOX OF GROWTH IN HOLINESS

Thoughts on Luke 7:36-47, 1 Cor. 15:9; Eph. 3:8 and 1 Tim. 1:15

(texts printed on next page)

OUR THESIS: As you become more holy, you will *feel* less holy.

1. **WE ASSUME:** "Truly mature Christians do not sin. I sin, so I am not very mature."

THE TRUTH: While it is true that more mature Christians have greater outward holiness, they *feel* like they are bigger sinners because they are more sensitive to His Holy Spirit and so see more of the deep sin patterns in their hearts. (1 Tim. 1:15)

2. **WE ASSUME:** "The more 'loving' I become, the less sin there will be in me."

LUKE 7 SHOWS THAT: A growing awareness of sin produces more love for Christ.

a. **WE CONFUSE** the results of sanctification (outward, visible holiness of life) with the internal process of sanctification which always includes a deepening sense of my sinfulness and my total inability to love God with my whole heart and others as myself.

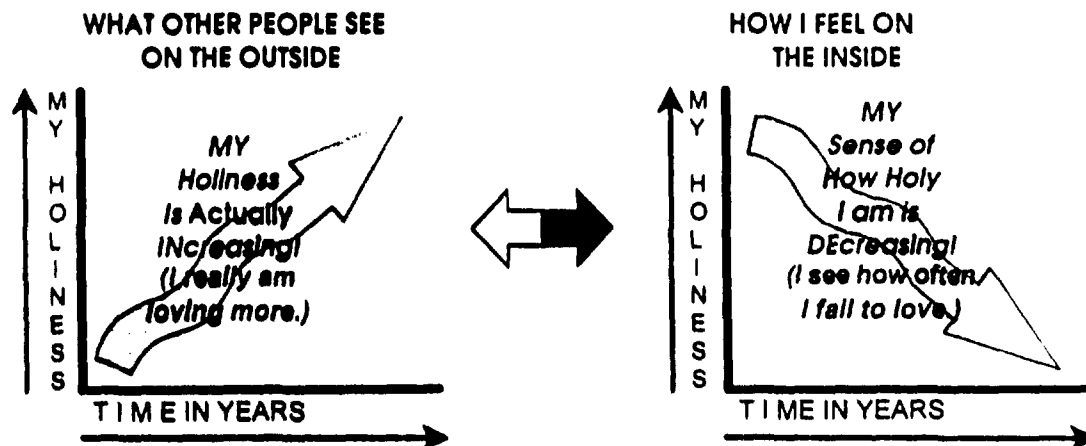
b. **GETTING IT STRAIGHT:** Getting Holler does not equal feeling holler. The more holy you are actually becoming, the *less* holy you will *feel*. (But rejoice, you are maturing.)

c. "Growth never feels like maturity. If you think you are mature, you are not. If you think you aren't, you may be. You will be the last one to know. Growth feels like death. Are you thirsty? (Isa. 55:1-3; Jn. 7:37) Thirst will produce sanctification. The Pharisees were not thirsty. They had no needs. The Publicans had nothing but need." -- Dr. Dan Allender

COMPARE THESE DIAGRAMS

Fig. 9-1

The True Measure of Holiness is Matthew 22:36ff — Love God, and love your neighbor.



SO . . . The Apostle Paul wrote in A.D. 65, the year of his martyrdom . . .

"Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: 'Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners - of whom I am the worst.'"

— 1 Timothy 1:15 —

SCRIPTURE FOR REFLECTION

Luke 7:36-47 Now one of the Pharisees invited Jesus to have dinner with him, so he went to the Pharisee's house and reclined at the table. When a woman who had lived a sinful life in that town learned that Jesus was eating at the Pharisee's house, she brought an alabaster jar of perfume, and as she stood behind him at his feet weeping, she began to wet his feet with her tears. Then she wiped them with her hair, kissed them and poured perfume on them.

When the Pharisee who had invited him saw this, he said to himself, *"If this man were a prophet, he would know who is touching him and what kind of woman she is -- that she is a sinner."* Jesus answered him, *"Simon, I have something to tell you."* *"Tell me, teacher,"* he said.

"Two men owed money to a certain moneylender. One owed him five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. Neither of them had the money to pay him back, so he canceled the debts of both. Now which of them will love him more?"

Simon replied, *"I suppose the one who had the bigger debt canceled."* *"You have judged correctly,"* Jesus said.

Then he turned toward the woman and said to Simon, *"Do you see this woman? I came into your house. You did not give me any water for my feet, but she wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. You did not give me a kiss, but this woman, from the time I entered, has not stopped kissing my feet. You did not put oil on my head, but she has poured perfume on my feet. Therefore, I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven -- for she loved much. But he who has been forgiven little loves little."* (NIV)

THE APOSTLE PAUL'S SELF IMAGE

1 Corinthians 15:9 *"For I am the least of the apostles and do not even deserve to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God."* c. A.D. 54

Ephesians 3:8 *"Although I am less than the least of all God's people, this grace was given me: to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ. . ."* c. A.D. 61

1 Timothy 1:15 *"Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners—of whom I am the worst."* c. A.D. 65 (the year of his martyrdom)

A LITTLE QUIZ

FOR YOUR COMMENT: These verses by Paul coupled with his battles with sin reflected in Romans 7 show that: (Circle TRUE or FALSE)

1. Paul was neurotically preoccupied with his sins and could neither forgive himself—nor believe fully that Jesus could completely forgive him. **TRUE or FALSE**
2. That he must have suffered from 'a poor self image.' **TRUE or FALSE**
3. That he had a realistic, healthy self-image. **TRUE or FALSE**
4. That he could never forget that whatever good was in him, and whatever God had accomplished through him was due solely to God's grace and the power of the Holy Spirit, nothing else. **TRUE or FALSE**
5. That with regard to the PURE LAW OF LOVE (Matthew 22) by which God judges the innermost hearts of all men—and which is the test of True Holiness, he was, like all others, a miserable failure who needed the cleansing blood of the interceding Christ every hour of his life. **TRUE or FALSE**

BUT ISN'T THIS "SEEING YOUR SIN" NEUROTIC?

"A person who thinks often of his sins, is sorry for them and repents of them is not a 'neurotic.' A neurotic is someone who endlessly repeats the same sins and will not accept correction or change." – Dr. C. John Miller

✠ THE CROSS CHART ✠

The Paradox of "WALKING IN THE LIGHT"

A Riddle: When is more less, and less more?

When I am truly growing in grace, I feel like more of a sinner—but I sin less and love more!

Concepts by Richard Lovelace¹, Paul Miller² and Johnny Long
Graphics design by J. W. Long, Jr. for — SONSHIP for Africa
Box 76254 Yafa Centre, Nairobi - Tel. 56-02-41 - jwlong@mac.org
¹ Renewal as a Way of Life, page 162. ² Sonship for the USA

AS I GROW AS A CHRISTIAN I become more conscious of and sensitive to my sin (not less), and more conscious of God's holiness. That is painful! But, as I daily "believe the gospel," the righteousness of Jesus "bridges the gap," and by faith, I repent and rest in my new identity in Him (Col. 2:6; Phil. 3:9). "Cheap Grace" is talking about Jesus without daily walking in him by the Spirit (talk without change).

THINK IT OVER & DISCUSS: Each and every time my sin is exposed, I must choose between two options:

1. I can forget the Cross of Jesus (that his blood covers all my sin) and try to make myself look righteous in the eyes of others. I can select a strategy like shifting the blame, making excuses, insisting that I am a "special case" (rationalization), or lying. OR, I can believe the Gospel...
2. In the pain and embarrassment of being exposed as a sinner, I "let the CROSS get bigger" (below). I admit my sin to God and others, hate it, take it to Jesus, ask forgiveness for it, and turn from it as I refocus on my true identity in Christ. I consciously clothe myself in Jesus, remembering that CHRIST DIED FOR SINNERS, and that is what I am. I identify with the sinful woman in Luke 7—I really need Jesus. **STUDY: Luke 7:36-47**

This chart illustrates Jesus' Luke 7:47 Principle: "He who is forgiven much loves much, but he who is forgiven little, loves little."

The Absolute Holiness of God

(The shading above "My Time Line" means that I cannot see God's holiness, so I am not "undone" by it like Isaiah was. cf. Isa. 6:1-5)

My New Birth!

My Time-Line

"B.C."

my awareness of God's holiness

I begin to see God's holiness and my sin, and **WALK IN THE LIGHT!**

A Babe

I Grow—Then Balk
I see more of of God's Law of Love and more of my deep personal and cultural sin patterns. I get tired of being such a needy sinner.

I Lower God's Standard
(I insert the "Surely God can't be serious")

I "Fake It"

I Settle for ...
"Cheap Grace"
The Gospel is just words. It is not changing me. Instead of repenting and running broken to Jesus, I try to protect my reputation.
Then... I Repent and Believe the Gospel... Again!

I Adjust The Record
(I insert the "Surely I am not that big of a sinner" wedge.)

my awareness of my sinfulness
I Cor. 15:9 >> Eph. 3:8 >> I Tim. 1:15

The Sinfulness of My Sin and the Power of My Flesh

(This shading below "My Time Line" shows that I am deceiving myself about my sin. I "walk in darkness." cf. John 1:7ff)

MY NEW IDENTITY IN CHRIST

SPRITUAL POWER!

Luke 7:47
Awareness that I'm...
1. a "BIG Sinner" leads to BIG love,
2. a "little sinner" leads to little love.

MORE WONDER
AS I SEE GOD'S HOLINESS AND THE PURITY OF HIS LAW OF LOVE (Isa. 6:1-4)

MORE JOY
AS I WALK IN THE LIGHT, TAKE MY SIN TO JESUS, AND AM CLEANSSED AND EMPOWERED BY THE SPIRIT TO SIN LESS, AND LOVE MORE

MORE PAIN
AS I SEE MY FLESH MY SIN (FAILURE TO LOVE GOD AND OTHERS), AND MY NEED TO REPENT. (Isa. 6:5; Rom. 7:24)

THE POINT? Spiritual growth comes as I see my sin, admit it, and "let the Cross grow bigger." The power to change flows from this faith-action

HOW TO ACT LIKE A SON

"How can I love, forgive, be happy, or witness when I'm such a MESS?"

I BEGIN BY REALIZING that there is a big difference between saying, "I am a Christian therefore I ought to do this," and, "Dear Father, I am your loved child; **empower** me to do this!

"I will not leave you as orphans... My Father will send the Spirit...He will be in you." — John 14:16-8

2 I think like an Orphan!

NEGATIVE INPUT FROM MYSELF

"Oh no, I am stuck in Romans 7!"

- "I don't love people!"
- I am *not* sharing the gospel.
- I don't *care* about the lost!
- I am hurt, angry & unforgiving.
- I am critical and love to gossip.
- I feel that God is far from me.
- I am worried about my future.
- I have lost my joy!

"What can I DO to fix this?"

Ignore the items that may not apply to you.

1 You act like an Orphan!

NEGATIVE INPUT FROM OTHERS

(spouse, kids, parents, family, other Christians, unbelievers)

- You're not loving me!
- You're a failure!
- You don't measure up!
- Basically, I reject you.
- You're not meeting my needs.
- But... If you try harder, I *might* accept you and love you.

(Their criticisms might be justified!)

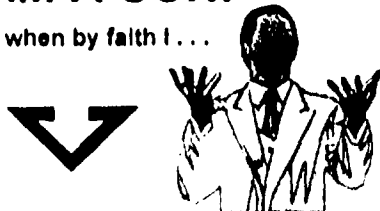
Ignore the items that may not apply to you.

MY INSTINCTIVE REACTION TO THIS NEGATIVE INPUT?

The Holy Spirit reminds me that...

I AM A SON!

SO, when by faith I...



THE "ORPHAN SHORTCUT" — I TRY TO ACT LIKE A SON!

Dripping with guilt and fear of looking bad, I try hard to "get better," or "do better" ... and fail.

THE PROBLEM: You can't get to 4 from 2. WHY? Holiness by "rules" and "human effort" can't work for Moses — and it won't work for you! You need to go 4 by way of 3 — the Gospel! (Gal. 3:3; 5:6; Rom. 7:6)

3 Think like a son...

By the Spirit I cry, "Abba-Father!"

ROOT — Intellectually and emotionally I act on my sonship. (Rom. 8:15) How?

- a. "Father, you love, accept and delight in me! I am yours!"
- b. "Jesus, you died for me and are interceding for me!"
- c. "Father! You sent your Spirit to live in me! I repent of my unbelief and disobedience!"

NOW, as I BELIEVE, I can BEHAVE.
Believing enables me to...

S
P
I
R
I
T
U
A
L

4 Act like a son!

SONSHIP

FRUIT — Acting like a SON or DAUGHTER!

- love for God
- love of the Word
- love of prayer
- LPPKGFGS
- care for others
- joyful, selfless obedience
- GOD GETS GREAT GLORY, and my joy returns as I use all I am and have to serve him.



WHY OUR EYES ARE NOT "FIXED ON JESUS"

Galatians 6:14
"May I never boast except
in the cross of the Lord
Jesus Christ, through who
I have been crucified to
the world, and the world
to me."

— We don't keep our eyes fixed on Jesus—
**BECAUSE, WE ARE TOO BUSY
STARING AT OUR ...**

Hebrews 12:1
"...let us run the race
marked out for us, keep
ing our eyes fixed on
Jesus, the Author and
Finisher of our faith.
consider Him..."


SUCCESSSES	OR	FAILURES
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Self-Reliance: "I CAN DO!" (<i>"I can handle this. I'm cool."</i>) Performance: Reputation Building— trying to make ourselves beautiful apart from Jesus' righteousness Pride In Our Spiritual Activity — Doing good things but neglecting the FIRST thing— <i>"keeping our eyes on Jesus."</i>  <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Prayer (for others, or for our own blessing, but not repentance for our deeper sins) Bible Reading (but just to teach or prove a point. We may be <i>"in the Word,"</i> but is the Word in us?) Studying Theology (etc.) Kingdom work (busyness) Comparing Our Successes with the Failures of Others of LESS Ability Penance: trying to <i>"atone"</i> for our own sins instead of admitting them, and taking them to Jesus 		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Frustrated Ego: "I CAN'T DO!" (<i>"I can't make life work!" "I'm not getting my way!"</i>) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Depression Self-Pity — <i>"Self-pity is such a wonderful virtue because it allows you to despise yourself and others at the same time."</i> — J.C. Miller Anger at others Criticism of others Worry Making Excuses: Not seeing sin as sin. (<i>"I have a terrible record. This can't possibly be my fault!"</i>) Non-Performance: Discouragement (<i>"Oh what's the use. I give up!"</i>) Comparing Our Failures to the Suc- cesses of Others of MORE Ability (<i>"Some people have all the luck."</i>) Penance: Feeling Guilty (<i>"dripping with guilt,"</i> putting ourselves down, denying ourselves good things)

Fig. 9-4

"Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies! Who is he that condemns? It is Christ Jesus who died—and more than that, who was raised to life and is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us!" — Romans 8:33,34

WHO I AM IN CHRIST: ROMANS 7

Two Ways to View Myself: An Individual or Small-Group Workshop

THE TYPICAL MODERN EVANGELICAL VIEW OF SELF — I don't think of myself as a son. I am not worthy. I need to try harder and get better. – Gal. 3:3

I = MY FLESH (i.e. the real me) My flesh defines me. I am a rotten mess and doomed to powerlessness over my indwelling sin.

MY FOCUS: *"O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"* (Romans 7:24a without 24b—or Romans 6 & 8) Romans 12 life is virtually impossible due to my theological self-perception. I become a "sin manager" instead a big repenter. I cover up a lot. I am relying on my "redeemed flesh" for strength to serve Christ and for victory over sin—but it is not working!

i = me 'positionally' in Christ "Positionally" is the same as "theoretically" to me. Who I really am is a big mess.

I THINK: God barely tolerates me because of the righteousness of Christ. He doesn't delight in me. I seem doomed to spiritual failure in an unwinnable war until I get to heaven. I have lost my joy. (Gal. 4:6)

RESULT: External obedience, Pharisaism, legalism, fear, failure, and eventual disillusionment with the Christian life.

THE APOSTLE PAUL'S VIEW OF HIMSELF — God delights in me. Although I am unrighteous, He looks at and treats me as if I am righteous. - 2 Cor. 5:21

I = THE REAL ME! — The "New Creature in Christ Jesus." This *IS* the "real me." This is who I am. The Father's love *defines* me. I look like Jesus to him.

MY FOCUS: Romans 8:2-16: I have power over "the law of sin and death" as I daily "look at Christ," and thereby am empowered by the Spirit to bear the fruit of the Spirit thereby bearing fruit for God and getting glory for him. I do not try to walk and work in my own strength. *"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me!"* (Phil. 4:13) The Spirit gives me the desire to repent and to live for Jesus. In the Spirit, I can keep His commandments from the heart. They are "not burdensome." I am loved; I am accepted; I am forgiven; I am a SON! *"For every I look I take at my sin, I take ten looks at Christ."* (the advice of Robert Murray McCheyne) 1 Jn. 5:2-4; 4:16,17; Matt. 11:28-30 *"...for my yoke is easy and my burden is light."* I see the depths of my sin. I can face it—but there is no power in seeing it. There is power in taking it to Jesus.

i = my flesh, NOT the real me (Yes, I have to deal with my flesh. I am a terrible sinner. *"Nothing good dwells in my flesh."* But who I really am is a son!)

Romans 7:17,20; Galatians 2:20 - I *"crucify the sinful nature with its passions and desires."* (I do this by *the Spirit*, not in my own strength. - Rom. 8:13)

Galatians 5:24; 1 Timothy 1:5 - *"a good conscience in the sight of God and men."*

THINK IT OVER: If the "redeemed flesh" (my new heart) can produce a changed life, then why did the Father send us the Spirit?

RESULT: New Life, Inner holiness. I keep the Law (love) with a new heart energized by the Spirit. I am not perfect, but I am repentant.



ROMANS 7 – Q & A

Wrestling With the Fact of Our Sinfulness

What shall we say, then? Is the law sin? Certainly not! Indeed I would not have known what sin was except through the law. For I would not have known what coveting really was if the law had not said, "Do not covet." ⁸ But sin, seizing the opportunity afforded by the commandment, produced in me every kind of covetous desire. For apart from law, sin is dead. ⁹ Once I was alive apart from law; but when the commandment came, sin sprang to life and I died. ¹⁰ I found that the very commandment that was intended to bring life actually brought death. ¹¹ For sin, seizing the opportunity afforded by the commandment, deceived me, and through the commandment put me to death. ¹² So then, the law is holy, and the commandment is holy, righteous and good.

¹³ Did that which is good, then, become death to me? By no means! But in order that sin might be recognized as sin, it produced death in me through what was good, so that through the commandment sin might become utterly sinful.

¹⁴ We know that the law is spiritual; but I am unspiritual, sold as a slave to sin. ¹⁵ I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do. ¹⁶ And if I do what I do not want to do, I agree that the law is good. ¹⁷ As it is, it is no longer I myself who do it, but it is sin living in me.

QUESTIONS ON ROMANS 7 and GALATIANS 3

1. **What, according to Paul, is the real value of the law for the Christian?** (Read carefully; this is tricky! Don't read into what he says, but rather discern what he says is the principle use of the law. Note especially vs. 13.)

2. **In Galatians 3, Paul spoke of the law as a "schoolmaster,"** (Greek: παιδαγωγός - "pedagogue")—the term for a Roman child's personal tutor and disciplinarian. What is the value of the law for the **unbeliever** mentioned in this passage? (3:23-26)

²³ But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. ²⁴ Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. ²⁵ But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster. ²⁶ For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. (KJV)

(Here's an interesting thought—a schoolmaster who has killed every student he ever had!)

3. **How does the fact that "faith has come" mean that we are free from the law?** (Gal. 3:25)
In what sense are we free? If we are "no longer under a schoolmaster," does that mean we are free to break the law? Certainly not! (However, did we ever keep it at all? The real law, remember, is perfect love to God and neighbor. Matt. 22:36f; Rom. 13:8ff)

4. **What is the value of the law for the believer?** How does the fact that "faith has come" mean that we can bear the spiritual fruit the law was unable to promote in us? (Where do faith and the Holy Spirit fit in?)

5. In Romans 7:14 and 20, does Paul mean to imply that when he sins, he is not responsible? If that is *not* what he means, what does he mean?
6. Do you think there a difference in acknowledging our flesh and sin—and letting our sin “define” who we are? What is it?

How should this self-knowledge affect our relationship to God?

To others?

7. Is there a difference in “low self esteem” and what Paul is admitting about himself here? (vs. 18) What difference?

¹⁸ I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. ¹⁹ For what I do is not the good I want to do, no, the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing.

8. How can we reconcile what Paul says about himself in 7:18-24 with his glowing affirmation in Philipplians 4:14: “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me”?

²⁰ Now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it. ²¹ So I find this law at work: When I want to do good, evil is right there with me. ²² For in my inner being I delight in God’s law; ²³ but I see another law at work in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within my members. ²⁴ What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death?

9. Paul ends Romans 7 on this triumphant note: (25a)

“Thanks be to God—through Jesus Christ our Lord!

But, then he adds: ^{25b} So then, I myself in my mind am a slave to God’s law, but in the sinful nature a slave to the law of sin.

Some Bible scholars insist that Paul’s affirmation refers to our coming glorification at the return of Christ—not to any victory we will have in this life. *What do you think?*

10. How does your **experience** of the Christian life match Paul’s as reflected in Romans 7? (Use the reverse side for your answer.)



The Flesh

by Jack Miller
Malaga, Spain — 1993

It was a frightening day. I woke up feeling lifeless. The music of the Gospel did not sing for me; it was almost as though I was walking in a desert of death. A feeling of aimlessness had settled on my mind during the night, and the only word to summarize my attitude was apathy. I tried to pray and found I had no desire whatsoever to do so. As I drank my morning coffee, it occurred to me that the devil was on the attack and I was in for a fight. But I also sensed that God too was speaking to me by his silence.

That sounds strange! God speaks by His silence? But I believe He does, and sometimes does it with great intensity. He wanted me to look squarely at an issue, the issue of a mixed faith—half trust in God and half trust in self. Here I was experiencing the negative power of my sinful nature (the flesh, or self-life inherited from Adam). It pulled me away from God. Was the devil involved? A suggestion drifted into my mind, *"Why do you need God? You can make it on your own."* I knew that was an almost perfect definition of "the flesh." Is not the flesh simply the spirit of independence from God—the rejection of our total dependence on His grace? The devil attacks our minds through stirring up fleshly self-reliance.

That afternoon I knew what I had to do. I must firmly resist the devil who was stirring up unspiritual self-confidence in me. Having spotted the enemy, I resolved to lean on God and pray for grace to fight against the deep rebellion of my own heart. The King gave me grace not to worry about feelings. Certainly at that time my spirit did not feel the Father's presence. No comforting hand touched me. Instead, I still felt completely alone, but now I could see a purpose in God's silence. In the desert of self, God was calling me to die to my self-competence (real or imagined). He wanted me to see its ugliness. So I confessed to God that apart from His grace I was a desert and that left to myself I would make a total mess out of my own life and ministry. That was a confession unto death. Die, Jack, die! By late afternoon the sense of desertion had faded away. Joy in Christ gradually returned, and my yearning to glorify God by winning the lost was strengthened.

At this time Rose Marie and I, with Clarice Chew, had been preparing for a demanding ministry in Poland, Russia, and England. Before this day in the pits, it appeared to me that I had already learned that the sinful nature must die and must keep on dying if faith is to flourish. But God thought otherwise. I had only been looking at a map of the battlefield like a civilian. I was not yet plunged into the fight.

The Lord wanted to bring this truth home to my heart with great power. He wanted to wrestle with my soul, like His wrestling with Jacob at Jabbock until something died and something new came to life. Faith, then, brings death as a prelude to new surgings of the Spirit's life of joy.

When we trust in Christ, we die to our self-righteousness in order to claim His righteousness. We are then healed from our guilt and shame. Filled with the Spirit of faith, we love others boldly. Our joy is sweet. Then, when we grow by "faith that works through love," we increasingly die to our fleshly self-effort. We are then healed of our orphan spirit.

Finally, when we mature in ministry effectiveness, we die to our self-competence. This is a hard death because in itself competence is a commendable quality—if it is a competence flowing out of grace. But we only arrive at such grace-competence through seeing by faith our incapacity to do God's work in God's way.



PART FOUR

THE FAITH-ACTIONS OF SONS & DAUGHTERS

***Sonship in Shoes — Life in the Family, the Church,
and Before a Watching World***

- §-10 - Repentance as a Way of Life
- §-11 - The Love Project : Loving Difficult People
- §-12 - Forgiveness as a Way of Life
- §-13 - Constructive vs. Destructive Conflict
- §-14 - Law vs. the Gospel in Home & Family
- §-15 - Gospel Manners : Christian Love & Culture
- §-16 - Brokenness : A New Paradigm for Ministry



Fig. 10-1

REPENTANCE AS A WAY OF LIFE



Fig. 10-2

"Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."

Psalm 139:23, 24

THESIS: Daily repentance is a normal and necessary part of a healthy Christian's life.

Consider: The more faithfully we are walking by the Spirit, the more sin he will reveal to us, so the more we will experience the *'painful pleasure'* of repentance. Therefore, the question is not: *"Shall I repent?"* but, *"The next time I sin, how will I respond?"* (And, if you understand the Law, you know you will sin soon.) Will I ignore it, deny it, blame someone else, or repent?

OUR PURPOSES IN THIS LESSON ARE: 1. To deal with the root cause of our reluctance to be repentant people, 2. to correct our misunderstandings about repentance so that, 3. we can begin to practice repentance and enjoy its fruits—great joy to us and glory to God!

I. THE IDEA OF "LIFESTYLE REPENTANCE" SOUNDS STRANGE TO US BECAUSE...

A. Our sensitivity to sin has been dulled by legalism which defines sin as the breaking of a set of external rules. Our consciences get dull and we begin to congratulate ourselves on our "holiness." Then, we react in anger when someone suggests that we might have something to repent of! We get blind to and defensive about our sin. ("You say, *'I am rich and have need of nothing!'* but you do not see that you are poor and miserable and blind..." Rev. 3:14-22)

B. We are confused about what Biblical repentance is. We confuse repentance with penance—trying to pay someone back without going to the gospel. Or, we suspect that it might be the same as groveling, low self esteem, or even a failure to believe that we are truly forgiven. *We don't understand that repentance is a normal, desirable, healthy, life-giving activity for any truly mature Christian!* (Miller 1980, 104)

C. We are stiff-necked and obstinate and don't want to change! We want the right to hold on to some of our pet sins, because we love them and they are useful to us. (Sin always gives pleasure, or we would not do it.) We want to be able to "make reservations" to do our pet sins when we want.

D. Lifestyle repentance implies that we "lose control" of our lives. The idea of surrendering our lives completely to the control of Christ, and moving from a self-centered to a God-centered lifestyle is frightening. Repentance involves pain, and we are committed to avoiding pain. Question: How are repentance and a visit to the dentist similar?

E. We think repentance will not help. We may say to ourselves, *"I have tried to change, but I just keep on falling. God's love is not big enough to keep on forgiving me when I keep falling. I may as well give up."* (This is a classic "Failure Mode" reaction. The "Pharisee" keeps on trying. Review S2-5)

II. WHY REPENTANCE IS NOT AN OPTIONAL FEATURE OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

- A. **FICTION:** "I have no sin!" (1 John 1:5-2:2 - *"If we say we have no sin..."*)
- B. **FACT:** *We are big sinners who have a big Savior!* This is hard to keep in mind because we just do not want to admit what big messes we are. Most of our lives are filled with strategies designed to make us feel good about ourselves *without* having to resort to a daily cleansing by Jesus through repentance!
- C. **REALLY? JUST HOW BAD AM I?** When we define sin as merely breaking an external commandment (the Pharisees' definition), we can end up looking quite good. In SONSHIP, we have repeatedly seen that the Scriptures define sin as:

*"Not loving God with my whole heart, soul, strength and mind,
and, not loving my neighbor as myself."*

Review: Matt. 22:37ff ; Rom. 13:8-10; Gal. 5:6,13-14; James 2:8-10

DO YOU REMEMBER Dr. Lovelace's definition of sin: (page 7-7)

"In it's biblical definition, sin cannot be limited to isolated incidents or patterns of wrongdoing; it is something much more akin to the psychological term 'complex': *'an organic network of compulsive attitudes, beliefs and behavior deeply rooted in our alienation from God.'* Sin originated in the darkening of the human mind and heart as man turned from the truth about God to embrace a lie about Him and consequently a whole universe of lies about His creation. Sinful thoughts, words and deeds flow forth from this darkened heart automatically and compulsively, as water from a polluted fountain."

— *Dynamics of Spiritual Life* (1979) page 88

Not a pretty picture, is it? THAT is how bad we are; how bad I am, and that makes grace all the more amazing! But, rather than destroying us—which is exactly what we deserved—what did God do? Paul tells us in Ephesians 2:4-9.

But God, who is rich in mercy, because of his great love for us, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast.

We mention the Gospel at this point, because multiplying words about repentance is of no use at all if we don't practice repentance, and as Lovelace says in *Dynamics*, *"The anesthetic of grace is constantly needed in the healing process of sanctification along with the surgical ministry of the law. . . . We cannot bear the light (shining) on our needs unless we are also in the light concerning God's grace to meet those needs."*

So, don't proceed to the next section until you take a break to "fix your eyes on Jesus" and remember how loved you are this very moment!

*Arise my soul, arise! Shake off thy guilty fears!
The bleeding sacrifice in my behalf appears.
Before the Throne my surety stands—
my name is written on His hands!*

— John Wesley, 1742

D. A GET-SERIOUS PRAYER FOR THE BELIEVER: PSALM 139:23,24

(Yes, this is the prayer we suggested you pray in our opening paragraph in S-1.)

"Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. Try me, and see if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."

1. **QUESTION:** Do you share David's eagerness to have God examine your heart—or do you feel fearful and defensive about what might be discovered?

WHY do you think some Christians would be fearful & defensive about their sin?

DO YOU AGREE OR DISAGREE? If we push the Holy Spirit away when he comes to search our hearts to show us our sin, we give the devil a foothold in our hearts and virtually assure that God will need to resort to some form of discipline to break us. (Hebrews 12)

2. **"THE HOLY LAND OF THE BROKEN HEART"** Michael Kelley Blanchard, a Christian song-writer/singer in the USA wrote a song entitled, *"The Holy Land of the Broken Heart."* It contains this line, a contemporary version of King David's prayer:

***"Jesus, Lord of all I am, hold me with your wounded hands;
Keep me in the Holy Land—of the broken heart."***

Why pray a prayer like that? Because God is pleased to dwell in only one kind of heart. What kind of heart is that?

"You do not delight in sacrifice, or I would bring it; you do not take pleasure in burnt offerings. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise." — Psalm 51:16,17

NOW FOR A LOOK AT THE "SPIRITUAL MECHANICS" OF REPENTANCE

III. UNDERSTANDING BIBLICAL REPENTANCE

A. FOUR THINGS REPENTANCE IS NOT: (wrong ideas about repentance)

Our thanks to Rev. Richard Downs, M.Div; M.A.B.C. (Biblical Counseling) for these points.

1. **Repentance is NOT simply a change in BEHAVIOR—especially not that we just stop doing bad things, though that is certainly involved.** (*"I quit robbing banks!"* So what!? Do you have a covetous heart? Do you share with others?)

"He who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with his own hands, that he may have something to share with those in need." — Eph. 4:28

2. **Repentance is NOT just TALK without CHANGE.** (not just good intentions) Learning the "lingo" of spiritual growth is easy. Repenting is not. Talk is cheap.

"Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth."

— 1 John 3:18

3. Repentance is NOT being sorry for GETTING CAUGHT. (godly vs. worldly sorrow)

"...now I am happy, not because you were made sorry, but because your sorrow led you to repentance. . . . Godly sorrow brings repentance. . . . — II Cor. 7:9-10

4. Repentance as a lifestyle is NOT a life of constant MISERY or GROVELING.

Groveling itself is just a form of legalism and self effort. When the Holy Spirit is doing his work of revealing sin, He "cuts clean," points us to Jesus, cleanses our conscience, and restores our joy. (Psalm 51:12)

NOTE: THERE IS ABSOLUTELY NO POWER IN THE 'DISCOVERY' OF SIN, OR IN 'BEATING OURSELVES UP' OVER IT! The power over sin comes when we take it to Jesus! — I John 1:9-2:1

5. Repentance is not a HUMAN work, but the work of the HOLY SPIRIT. — Jn. 16:8

6. Repentance is NOT merely making restitution, although that will always follow true repentance. See: Luke 19:1-10 — Jesus and Zacchaeus

B. PRECISELY—WHAT IS TRUE REPENTANCE? (What goes on in the heart during it?)

1. 'SEARCH AND DESTROY!' Before we can repent, we must "see" our sin. Two problems confront would-be repenters: (a) the complexity of sin in the myriad ways (overt and subtle) we can fail to love God and our neighbor, and, (b) our reluctance to face the truth about our hearts.

Should you get tangled up in a complex situation in which you have difficulty seeing your sin (I often do), take heart: we have a friend! The Holy Spirit specializes in that field! Why not ask his help? He will be delighted to comply! **TRY THIS:** In prayer, lay out the situation you are struggling with before the Father and pray, *"Oh Holy Spirit, show me my sin! Where have I failed here to love God with all my heart, and my neighbor as myself? Right now, all I can see is my excuses and the other person's sins!"* Now, "listen." The answer will come—immediately, or over hours, a day or days—as the Holy Spirit applies the words and principles of the Scriptures to your heart. Then, repent.



Fig. 10-3

2. TRUE REPENTANCE HAS THREE COMPONENTS: Intellectual - Emotional - Volitional

a. INTELLECTUAL: I AGREE WITH GOD'S ASSESSMENT OF MY SIN *"If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.... If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word has no place in our lives." — I Jn. 1:8-10* **Admitting our guilt is the first (and most difficult?) step.**

But true repentance goes beyond a bland, intellectual admission of guilt.

b. EMOTIONAL: I LET THAT TRUTH CAUSE ME SORROW (Also quoted above)

"Even if I caused you sorrow by my letter, I do not regret it. Though I did regret it—I see that my letter hurt you, but only for a little while—yet now I am happy, not because you were made sorry, but because your sorrow led you to repentance. For you became sorrowful as God intended and so were not harmed in any way by us. Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death. — 2 Cor. 7:8ff

c. VOLITIONAL: I RUN TO JESUS, CONFESS MY SIN AND RECEIVE HIS FORGIVENESS!

Here we may invite some argument that the "volitional" element in repentance is reversing our direction and doing good! Wait. We will come to that. **BUT, FIRST THINGS FIRST.** Before we rush out to do good, **WE GO TO CHRIST!** And where is Christ? He is seated at the right hand of the Father as our Great High Priest, interceding for us—waiting for us to come—ready to welcome his repenting ones! Christian repentance is not just a change in behavior. (p. 10-3, III, Items 1 and 6) It is going to the Gospel for cleansing—and staying there for the power to change! Our first act of volition (of the will) must be to go to directly to Christ.



Fig. 10-4

3. THE PROMISE OF THE GOSPEL —

- ◆ *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.* — 1 Jn. 1:9

- ◆ *By one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy....*

(NOTE: Justification and sanctification are included in that one verse.) The Holy Spirit also testifies to us about this. First he says: "This is the covenant I will make with them after that time, says the Lord. I will put my laws in their hearts, and I will write them on their minds." Then he adds: "Their sins and lawless acts I will remember no more." (NOTE: He has quoted Jeremiah 31:31ff here.) And where these have been forgiven, there is no longer any sacrifice for sin.

Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. — Heb. 10:14-24

BEWARE: It is easy to confuse repentance
with the fruits of repentance.

IMPORTANT: There is a very good reason that so much of our "repenting" bears no fruit—it is not repenting at all, but an Evangelical form of penance.

Some of our Protestant preaching borders on "corporate penance" as the pastor, whip of the Law in hand, ascends the pulpit to flog the congregation—most often sparing himself. (If he includes himself, at least the whipping is more bearable, though that doesn't guarantee it will be a profitable!) We believe that leaving the sanctuary feeling horrible about ourselves is "growth in grace," but the next few hours will prove it to be fruitless "sermonic" penance. At least our Roman Catholic friends have been honest enough to come right out and make a "sacrament" of it. (Here, I confesses my own sins, as I was a professional "flogger" for the first twenty-five years of my ministry.)

In this lesson, we purposely separate **repentance** and the **fruits of repentance** (which will come later in the lesson) so that we do not confuse the two and end up trying to make some sort of payment for our own sins rather than going to the Gospel with them.

Our next point is controversial—prepare yourself!

4. **WHEN I SIN AGAIN (PERHAPS EVEN THE VERY SAME SIN) I REPENT AGAIN.** Yes, we struggled over the word "when," and were tempted to change it to "if." "When" stays. Why? **Because of the power of our flesh and the spiritual nature of the Law.** (If this is confusing to you, revisit pages 10-1, Items I. A and B, and 10-2, point II. B. We forget so quickly!)

"WHEN" INDICATES THAT WE REALLY ARE THIS BAD, SO GRACE HAS TO BE THIS BIG!

The self-righteous man will resist this news just as the lazy Christian will try to take advantage of it, but the fact is, for the repentant, *the grace of God is a well with no bottom. As many times as I sin and repent, the Father will forgive me.* (NOTE: This is the reason Jesus demands that we imitate God by forgiving others this way, as we shall see in S-12, "Forgiveness as a Way of Life." — Ref. Matt. 18:21,22)

Need we repeat it? Sin is not loving God and not loving your neighbor. We can't congratulate ourselves on keeping a ten external rules and throw out repentance.

Repentance must be a way of life because sinning is a way of life!

I wonder: how many times a day do we fail to keep the "Royal Law" of love—either by hurting others or not positively loving them—hundreds? Do we overstate the case? **Not at all. Imagine Jesus switching places with us for just one day.** Our every variance from the way *he* would obey our Father and love our neighbors is sin.

Let that realization hit you hard and humble you. We need to ask the Spirit to show us the deeper sin patterns in our lives, otherwise we will wander glibly on through our Christian lives and never really grow. We may learn more "stuff" about the faith, but that is not the same as growing. Growing is obeying, and obeying is loving. That is the message of 1 John. When we get serious about repenting, God will begin to get the full measure he deserves from our lives as the world watches him transform us before their eyes! (Ezek. 36:22,23)

THINK ABOUT IT: As habitual sinners, our choices are pretty limited. We can:

a. repent as often as we see our sin—and for what we know must be there but we can't see ("Search me, O God..."), **b.** lapse into a spiritual coma until we die or Jesus comes, or, **c.** retreat into a self-righteous legalism that imagines righteousness, and so become a liability to God a colossal pain to mankind like the Pharisees.

IV. HOW DOES CHANGE TAKE PLACE? (REVIEW S-07 "HOW TO CHANGE...")

Change is the fruit of the root of Gospel faith. So, as we "keep believing the Gospel," the Holy Spirit will change us, giving us his fruit. **Change will come** as we are broken over our sin and turn away from it *because we love God and want to bring Him glory.* As we turn away from sin, we love the Father and others the way Jesus did (and does). And, wonder of wonders, the Law we "died to" (Rom. 7), is kept—and that without trying! Trying never Holiness comes by a direct and personal relationship to Christ—not a direct impersonal relationship to the Law. The heart set on Christ obeys the Law because the heart is set on Christ. Those who merely "do the right thing" without their hearts set on Christ are mere moralists parading as Christians.

Saying that faith is the effectual means of sanctification may sound terribly simplistic!

Some insist that "the means of grace" (the Word, the sacraments and prayer) are the effectual means of sanctification, and they are partly right—but shortsighted. Why? Because the "means of grace" are effectual only as they are *received by faith. Faith, nurtured by the direct operation of the Holy Spirit give them their efficacy.*

Lets take a look what four classic authorities, two old Confessions and two theologians say.

- A. **The Westminster Confession of Faith** (Ch. 29, § 7,9), and the **Philadelphia Confession of Faith** (Baptist, 1742, Ch. 32 § 7, 8) teach that the Lord's Supper may be "worthily" received "inwardly by faith"—or without faith in which case there is no benefit.

IMAGINE A COMMUNION SERVICE: Two men sit side-by-side in church, the one a believer (full of faith), the other, an unbeliever posing as a Christian because church is a good place to practice one's English. The pastor prays over the bread and wine, and the plates are passed. Both men put identical substances in their mouths—bread and wine, but a tear is trickling down the Christian's cheek, while the other man's is dry. The Christian is sitting in church, but "kneeling at the foot of the cross" in his heart. He is repenting. The unbeliever is sitting in Church, but can't wait to practice English with the members after the benediction. The one gets Christ, the other only a crumb of bread and a drop of wine. Both took "the means of grace." ***What made them differ?***

Now think through the implications of what these two great American theologians of the 18th century had to say:

- B. **Augustus A. Hodge** (Commentary on the *Westminster Confession of Faith*, p. 195)

"The inward means of sanctification is faith."

- C. **R. L. Dabney, D.D., L.L.D.** — "Repentance and Faith Mother-Graces"

"Now, there are two graces, by whose intervention the efficacy of all these means of sanctification is always mediated to the soul. In other words, these two graces are the media through which all other means come in efficacious contact with the soul. They may, therefore, be called the mother graces of all the others. They are Repentance and Faith. It is only when an object is apprehended by a full and active belief, that it becomes the occasion of any act of the soul. . . . Belief is the instigator of action. But in order that belief may instigate action, the object believed in must be so related to the affections of the mind, that there shall be strong desire or repulsion. In the case of saving faith, that relation is repentance—i.e., the active affections of the regenerate soul as to holiness and sin, and the means for attaining the one and shunning the other. The student may now understand why God gives these graces such prominence in practical religion. They are the media for the exercise of all others. It follows, obviously, that repentance and faith must be in perpetual exercise during the whole progress of sanctification." (Lectures in Systematic Theology, pp. 665ff)

This is profound. Hodge, Dabney and the writers of these confessions have perceived that the "means of grace" are means of no grace unless they are practiced with faith. And, they aren't speaking of some vapid "faith" with no object—but one whose eyes are "fixed on Christ." Our praying, our Bible reading, our "Quiet Time," our hearing of the preached Word, our singing of praises, our taking of the Lord's Supper, or repenting—whatever religious exercise—depends on faith for its efficacy. ***"Without faith, it is impossible to please God."*** — Heb. 11:6

V. THE FRUITS OF GENUINE REPENTANCE: (Where does repentance lead us?)

Sincere repentance powerfully impacts all three of our personal relationships—with: God, with ourselves (our conscience) and our neighbor.

A. With God

1. **HUMILITY** — **We are humbled before God. There is no room for pride or boasting of any kind. Everything we have is of grace.** When we know and feel this, it pervades all our thoughts about him and our communication with him. Even when nobody

sees or hears the thoughts of our hearts, this gives him glory! He is made glad. He is "freed up" to bless us—instead of chasten us.

2. **THE INTIMACY OF A HEALED RELATIONSHIP** — Note the "joy in heaven over one sinner who repents" in the three parables in Luke 15 about three "lost things," a lost sheep (vs. 3-7), a lost coin (vs. 8-10), and a lost son (vs. 11-32). Technically, these parables are about spiritually lost people, but it is in keeping with God's character to feel the same joy when his disobedient sons and daughters (us) return to his arms! Charles Haddon Spurgeon in his sermon on the return of the prodigal waxes eloquently about "the repeated 'kisses of the Father' on his son. That is how God receives us.

NOTE: Jesus' invitation to intimacy to the errant Christians of the church of Laodicea

Revelation 3:14ff "To the angel of the church in Laodicea write... Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline. So be earnest, and repent. Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me." (eating together denotes intimacy in Jewish culture)

NOTE: Repentance is the key to intimacy with Christ. It makes sense. He knows the truth about us. He sees everything, died for it all, and is interceding for us now!

B. With Ourselves

1. The Cleansing of Our Conscience and Personal Integrity

Psalm 51:6-13 "Surely you desire truth in the inner parts (integrity); you teach me wisdom in the inmost place. Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow. Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones you have crushed rejoice. Hide your face from my sins and blot out all my iniquity. Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me."

1 Timothy 1:5, 9; 3:9 — "The goal of this command is love, which comes from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith. fight the good fight, holding on to faith and a good conscience."

Heb. 10: 22 — "...let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience

2. **We Desire to Be Obedient in the Future** — Take heart! God is our Partner in battle—not a spectator! And remember that the weapons of our warfare against sin are Gospel faith (in particular here as a focus on our risen, interceding Christ) and the Holy Spirit. As we said in S-7, you can't fight the flesh with the flesh!

Romans 8:13b "...but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live, because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God."

2 Timothy 2:19-22 "Nevertheless, God's solid foundation stands firm, sealed with this inscription: 'The Lord knows those who are his,' and, 'Everyone who confesses the name of the Lord must turn away from wickedness.' In a large house there are articles not only of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay; some are for noble purposes and some for ignoble. If a man cleanses himself from the latter, he will be an instrument for noble purposes, made holy, useful to the Master and prepared to do any good work. **Flee** the evil desires of youth, and **pursue** righteousness, faith, love and peace, along with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart."

C. With Others (In Reconciliation)

I run to my sinned-against Christian brother or sister, my child, spouse or non-believing neighbor to make restitution and be reconciled. Relationships can usually (though not always) be healed when we go to them humble and broken (possible when we are consciously clothed in Jesus righteousness, and don't need our own "rightness").

Matthew 5:23-24 *Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to your brother; then come and offer your gift.*

CAUTION: There are wise and loving limits to which sins we should publicly repent of—and to whom. Our students have often asked if they should confess "thought-life" sins such as envy, lust, etc. Our counsel? Normally, the specifics of them should be confessed to God alone. Why? Because your confession might become a stumbling block to the one you have sinned against. **FOR EXAMPLE:** If you said to Mary, "Mary, there was a time when I struggled with lust for you, but now I have repented." Mary would take that as a sexual overture, not a well-meant confession. Is there a good rule to guide us here? Yes, the "Royal Law" of love. If your repentance would be hurtful to a loving, God-centered relationship with the person, then repent to God alone—or share it and pray about it with a Christian friend—one of the same sex if the sin is something like lust.

A WORD ABOUT GOD'S DISCIPLINE OF US AS HIS CHILDREN: Read Hebrews 12:1-13, and think over the difference between "chastening" and "punishment?" Does it matter?

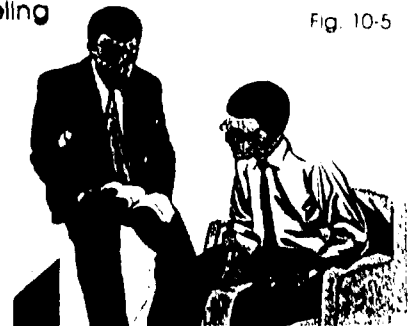
THINK: If Jesus bore the wrath of God due to us for our sins, then what is the purpose of the suffering God allows (he is sovereign and could prevent it) into our lives?

CONSIDER: What if every time we failed to keep the God's Law (to love him with all of our heart and our neighbor as ourselves) God poured out on us the kind of harsh punishment we give our spouses, children, employees or fellow Christian? How happy would life be? Jesus said, **"Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy."** (Matt. 5:7) No, we don't ignore the sin in others, but when we are repentant people, we will also be merciful and longsuffering toward others—the way God is of us. This is just one of the many fruits of a repentant life. Another one is the ability to love unbelievers!

D. With Others — In Evangelism

NOTE: Now we repeat Psalm 51:6-12, but add vss. 13,15 so that we can see the flow of David's thoughts. He comes to God defiled, broken hearted and longing for cleansing. But as he anticipates his guilt being removed and his feeling clean before God again, he breaks out in a song of joy about the powerful effect his testimony of grace and forgiveness is going to have on other sinners!

Fig. 10-5



Psalm 51:6-15 *Surely you desire truth in the inner parts; you teach me wisdom in the inmost place. Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow. Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones you have crushed rejoice. Hide your face from my sins and blot out all my iniquity. Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation and give me a willing spirit, to sustain me. Then I will teach transgressors your ways, and sinners will turn back to you. . . O Lord, open my lips and my mouth will declare your praise!*

WHY IS EVANGELISM THE NATURAL FRUIT OF A REPENTANT HEART? Because a repentant heart is a freshly forgiven and newly cleansed heart. Joyful Gospel testimony flows very naturally from our lips when we have experienced God's forgiving grace again! King David didn't need an evangelism program to start him sharing the Good News of grace, and neither will we!

AN ADDED BENEFIT OF REPENTANCE is that there is nothing quite so attractive to an unbeliever as a freshly-broken Christian! Our sharp edges are smoothed off and our boasting is silenced. *There is nothing to boast about except Jesus!*

"WEAKNESS EVANGELISM" is when a repentant Christian shares the Gospel with an unbeliever. Try this: Rather than beginning by spending a lot of time showing your Sikh, Muslim, Hindu, Animist or pagan friend *his* sin and the errors in *his* religion, tell him about *your* sin and the errors (of practice) in *your* religion! They *do* read the newspapers! Tell him how God has cleansed and forgiven you. *Paul did this constantly!* (Acts 22:26, etc.)

I took a Sikh neighbor out to dinner specifically to share the Gospel with him. He is a very wealthy electrical contractor, and I was nervous. (I wanted him to keep liking me). I begged the Holy Spirit for wisdom. Straightaway he asked if I had come to Africa "to convert people to Christianity." (Invariably this is a prelude to, "Everyone should keep the religion he was born in.") I said yes, and that I would like to see him converted, but that my main work here was training pastors not to repeat all the mistakes I had made as a Christian and a minister. Now he was "all ears." I told him how Jesus, the eternal Son of God had come to earth to lay down his life on the cross for a sinner like *me*, a self-centered, self-loving breaker of God's law, one who doesn't love the God who created me or my fellow man as I love myself. Then I told him how I had begun my Christian will, but had fallen into using the ministry for my own glory—stealing the praise due unto God alone. I told him how grieved I was that I had done *this* to the Son of God who had come down to die on the cross for me, was raised from the dead for me, and who had ascended back to the right hand of God the Father to constantly pray for me and cover me the sinner with his righteousness so that I am beautiful to God the Father. I could hardly believe I was saying all of this—nor could he! ("Europeans" don't repent.)

All this was said while eating a delicious dinner (medallions of impala), so it was not rushed and came out quite naturally. Toward the end of my "talk" (interspersed with questions like, "Have you ever know of anyone who was raised from the dead?") I looked up from my plate, and big tears were rolling down his face. He opened up his heart and began to tell me about terrible fights he had with his wife, and asked if we could discuss these things with her. He explained that they were very religious, but that they felt "lost"—not the way we define it—but an amazing admission nonetheless! That was in 1995. Three years and many encounters later, he still has not become a Christian. But he has the Bible I gave him, and is always willing to get together. The Spirit must open his heart. I can't. But I can keep sharing my daily need of Jesus and use that to press home *his* need for Jesus.

WHEN repentance becomes the daily habit of our lives, a freshness and vitality will invade our walk with Jesus and others. Our joy will abound more and more because our experience of God's grace is rooted not only in the forgiveness of our past sins, but our present ones as well. Indeed, we will find that we share something in common with Paul—a mature Christian to be sure—and a veteran repentor.

"This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, 'Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners — of whom I am the worst!'"

— 1 Timothy 1:15

CONCLUSION

If you were to ask, "**What is your most urgent personal prayer request?**" I would want you to pray that I have "a broken and contrite heart." Why? Isn't that a prayer for pain? Well, seeing your sin is never easy, but it keeps you running to Jesus for cleansing. And that is joy—and LIFE!

Real growth in Christ will never begin for us until we learn to pray from the heart that line we quoted from Michael Kelley Blanchard's song:

*"Jesus, Lord of all I am, hold me with your wounded hands;
Keep me in the Holy Land—of the broken heart."*



GRACE ASSIGNMENTS

Experiment with the joy of doing these in partnership with your Father!

1. GRACE-WORK

- Study the “Proud Hearts & Broken Hearts” list on p. 10-13 and 10-14.
- Do the “Repentance Workshop” on p. 10-15.

2. GRACE-READING

- Read the brief quotation from Charles Haddon Spurgeon on “REPENTANCE.” (below)
- Read “Walking in the Light,” the testimony of a Ugandan pastor regarding the value of public repentance. (p. 10-17)



REPENTANCE

by Charles Haddon Spurgeon

Spurgeon writes, “. . . I hear another man cry, ‘Oh, sir, my lack of strength is mainly due to the fact that I cannot repent sufficiently!’ What a curious idea men have of what repentance is!”

Many people believe that so many tears must be shed, so many groans must be heaved and so much despair must be endured. Where to they get this unreasonable notion? Unbelief and despair are sins! Therefore, I do not see how they can be components of true repentance. Yet, there are many who regard them as necessary parts of true Christian experience. They are in great error.... Oh, that I could help others into the light which I now enjoy! I would gladly say a word which might shorten the time of their confusion. I would say a few plain words and pray ‘The Comforter’ to apply them to the heart.

Remember that the man who truly repents is never satisfied with his own repentance. We can no more repent perfectly than we can live perfectly. However pure our tears, there will always be something to be repented of, *even in our best repentance*. But listen! To repent is to change your mind about sin and Christ and all the great things of God. There is sorrow implied in this, but the main point is the turning of the heart from sin to Christ. If there is this turning, you have the essence of true repentance even though no alarm or despair have cast their shadow on your mind.

If you find it difficult to repent, it will greatly help you to firmly believe that “at the right time, Christ died for the ungodly.” (Rom. 5:6) Think of this again and again. How can you continue to be hardhearted when you know that out of supreme love “Christ died for the ungodly”? Let me persuade you to reason with yourself this way: “Ungodly as I am, though my heart of steel will not yield, though I beat my breast in vain—yet He died for such as I am, because He died for the ungodly!” Oh, that I may believe this and feel the power of it in my unmerciful heart! Blot out every other reflection from your soul! Sit down by the hour and meditate deeply on this one resplendent display of unmerited, unexpected, unexampled love, “Christ died for the ungodly!” (Spurgeon 1996, *All of Grace*)

What is the Lesson for Us Here? That: The Secret to Repentance Is In Where You Look!

- Looking at Christ will lead you to repentance.
- Repenting is the fruit of “looking.” Don’t make a “Saviour” out of repentance—look to the Savior for repentance!
- The Holy Spirit turns us to Christ, and in so doing, turns us from sin. LOOK AWAY, then from the effect (repentance) to the cause (looking at Christ). Turn from your own efforts to repent to the Lord Jesus who is exalted on high. He will grant you the repentance you seek.



— JWJ —

PROUD HEARTS & BROKEN HEARTS

WHAT IS THE "SPARK" that will *ignite* the fire of revival in our hearts and homes? Brokenness. What is the indispensable ingredient for *ongoing* renewal in the body of Christ? Brokenness—and not "theirs" but mine. There only one way "up" with God—down. One chief ministry of the Holy Spirit is the purification of God's people. (Ezek. 36:22-27) When he shows us our sins and we confess them—privately and publicly—revival comes! Consider then, these two kinds of people with two kinds of hearts

PROUD PEOPLE . . . BROKEN PEOPLE . . .

ARE SELF-CENTERED, FEARFUL, SELFISH & BOASTING & HAVE A "SMALL CHRIST"

Psalm 138:6 Though the LORD is on high, he looks upon the lowly, but the proud he knows from afar.
1 Peter 5:5 ...All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because, "God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble."
Rev. 3:17 You say, "I am rich, and need nothing."

PROUD HEARTS are focused on the faults and failures of others

are self-righteous & have a critical, fault-finding spirit that looks down on others.

look down on others

have an independent, self-sufficient spirit

have to prove they are right

claim their rights; have a demanding spirit

are self-protective of their time, their rights, and their reputations

desire to be served, or serve to be seen

desire personal success and acclaim

desire self-advancement

desire to be recognized & appreciated; are sad when others are promoted

have the feeling *"this ministry is privileged to have me and my gifts."*

are confident in how much they know

are self-conscious and are always wondering, *"How do I look?"*

keep others at a distance, are unapproachable and overconfident

are defensive when criticized

DIE TO THEIR LOVE OF REPUTATION & TAKE REFUGE IN A MIGHTY CHRIST

Psalm 51:16f You do not delight in sacrifice, or I would bring it; you do not take pleasure in burnt offerings. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart. O God, you will not despise.
Psalm 34:18 The LORD is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit

BROKEN HEARTS are overwhelmed with a sense of their own spiritual need

2 are compassionate and forgiving (they know how much they are forgiven)

3 esteem all others better than themselves

4 are dependent on God and others

5 are willing to give up the right to be right

6 yield up their rights; have a meek spirit

7 are self-denying of their time, their rights, and non-defensive

8 are motivated to serve others

9 are motivated to be faithful; want to make *others* successful for God

10 desire to promote and rejoice in others

11 have a sense of their own unworthiness; are surprised when God uses them

12 know all they have to offer God is Jesus' life flowing through their broken lives

13 are humble since they have much to learn

14 are unconcerned with self; keep forgetting about themselves

15 risk letting others get close to them, are tender-hearted and vulnerable

16 are able to receive criticism with an open, humble spirit



PROUD HEARTS... are quick to blame others	17 BROKEN HEARTS... can accept personal responsibility and see where they are wrong
are concerned with being respectable and protecting their image and reputation	18 are willing to die to their own reputation and live to promote Christ's glory and honor
find it difficult to share their spiritual needs with others	19 are able and willing to be open and transparent with others
cover up their sin and are fearful that anyone might find out	20 are willing to be exposed. Christ is their righteousness; they have nothing to lose.
have a hard time saying "I was wrong" and use vague generalities to confess their sins	21 are quick to seek forgiveness, and are able to acknowledge specific sins - Jas. 5:16
focus on the hurts from others; view themselves as victims in need of sympathy	22 focus on their need of Jesus & see themselves as sinners needing a Savior
are most concerned about the painful consequences of their sin—sorry they "got caught"—not over hurting God and others	23 are grieved over the root cause of their sin, and grieved that they have hurt God and others, and want to forsake their sin
when in a conflict always wait for the other person to come first and say "I'm sorry."	24 take the initiative to be reconciled and race to say "Please forgive me; I am sorry!"
compare themselves with others, and feel worthy of special honor	25 compare themselves with Jesus and feel a desperate need for God's mercy
are blind to their heart's real condition	26 walk in the Light
can't think of anything they need to repent of—self-satisfied	27 realize they need a heart attitude of repentance every day of their lives
don't think they need revival—but are quite sure that everyone else does.	28 sense their need for continual encounters with God, daily cleansing from sin, and the constant filling of the Holy Spirit.

This list is edited for *SONSHIP for Africa* with many thanks to Nancy Leigh DeMoss of Campus Crusade for Christ International who presented it at their USA National Staff Training Institute in June 1995.

SPIRITUAL PRIDE & BROKENNESS IN SCRIPTURE: A SAMPLER

Isaiah 57:15 For this is what the high and lofty One says—he who lives forever, whose name is holy: "I live in a high and holy place, but also with him who is contrite and lowly in spirit, to revive the spirit of the lowly and to revive the heart of the contrite."

Luke 18:9-14 Jesus parable to some who were confident of their own righteousness and looked down on everybody else: Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood up and prayed about himself: "God, I thank you that I am not like other men—robbers, evildoers, adulterers—or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get." But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, "God, have mercy on me, a sinner." I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. *For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.*

Romans 12:1,3,10 Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God. This is your spiritual act of worship. **3** For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment... **10** Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves.

Philippians 2:1-7 If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose. *Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves.* Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself *of no reputation*, and took the nature of a servant...

WALKING IN

The Importance of Being
One Ugandan Pastor's

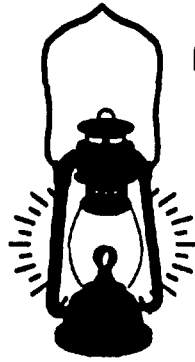


Fig. 10-6

THE LIGHT

Broken For Others
Powerful Testimony

IMMEDIATELY after my conversion in the 1960's I was introduced to the late Mondo, one of the founding fathers of the Revival Fellowship in Uganda. From time to time I would visit Mondo and was profoundly attracted to his emphasis on *"walking in the light."*

It was through Mondo's teaching that I came to learn about the East African revival. In the 1930's several Ugandans had discovered that, though they were busy having Bible studies, holding prayer meetings, and attending church services, these things they were doing were not the central message of Christ's teaching. They had to ask themselves: *"Did Jesus die for our meetings, or was it for something else?"*

They found that Jesus taught that before you can enjoy true fellowship with God, you need to make sure you are reconciled to your brother and sister whom you might have wronged during the day (Matthew 5:23). The command is to go quickly and make amends. Christ did not die for our devotions. What Christ paid such a dear price for is our relationship with God and with each other. When those relationships are violated, our devotions are an abomination to God. A broken relationship is a poison. The Bible makes no exceptions. Both the offended and the offender are equally guilty before God. You are to seek out those you think have something against you. If someone wrongs you, you have the obligation to rebuke him. If he repents, you have the obligation to forgive him.

The Revival Fellowship also found that we must confess our sins to one another. Confessing our sins is synonymous with walking in the light. Both James and John agree that, when this occurs, there is a healing from the Lord (James 5:16, 1 John 1:7). When there no walk-

'If we claim to have fellowship with him yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live by the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.'

ing in the light, however, our prayers and church services become no more than religious counterfeits. Every time I met with Mondo he greeted me with a threefold challenge:

"Are you repenting?"

"Are you walking in the light?"

"Are you being broken?"

Mondo's questions were directed to the kind of fellowship I was having with the Christians with whom I was doing mission work. His suspicion that we were avoiding the real work of God in our lives was well founded. Gradually it became clear to me what Mondo was saying. Jesus did not die for working together but for *fellowshipping* together. He died for walking in the light, for confessing sins to one another!

I remember when I walked into my first Revival Fellowship meeting. It was a Friday afternoon. The hall was almost packed, and the people were singing and praising God. Most of the songs were about the blood of the Lamb that was slain. Different people stood up one after another confessing their sins. When a brother stood up and confessed his sin openly, I noticed that the rest of the people were not paying much attention to the sin confessed. Before a sister would finish her confession, they would burst out in songs of praise.

Even though I was a little shaky, I finally stood up too. I confessed about my past unfaithfulness to my Creator and how that had damaged my life. Before I finished, people started singing praises for the blood of the Lamb. When I resumed my seat, one brother came and embraced me. I could feel the warmth in his hand as he said to me, *"This is victory, brother!"*

"Is this the fellowship John speaks of?" I asked my self. These brothers and sisters hardly majored on my sin. Mondo explained to me later, "What we hear is not your sin, but God's work in your life. We hear you giving witness to God's power to break the chains of sin. We know that, left to ourselves, we can never go to a brother and confess to him, 'I have done foolishly, forgive me.' This can only occur when grace takes over and pushes our pride into a tight corner."

One lady wrote me recently about a Revival Fellowship which was being held underground in Uganda. At one meeting many people began to be convicted of the sin of dishonesty in their lives. They confessed this sin to one another. One of Amin's spies was in the meeting and before he knew what was happening to him, he was on his knees confessing his deception! He was pretending to be a Christian, he said, when he was actually a spy. After this conviction of sin, he had the desire to know Christ.

Now I understand what Mondo meant. If I am having Bible study but disowning my brother, I am not walking in the light. If I am going to church but keeping my sister at a distance, I am not walking in the light. Without a willingness to live a transparent life before my brother and sister, our meetings are just another form of alienation. But, when we walk in the light, unity comes and sin is broken as the outflowing of a life of praise.

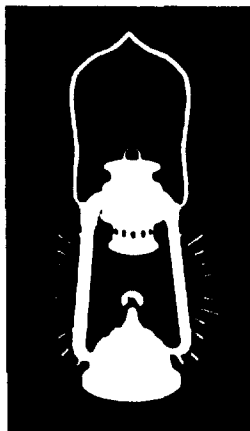
In the call to missions that I heard as a young man, the emphasis had been on "go" not "love." It was the *ministry*, not the brethren, that was most important. As a result I came to love my sermons more than the people to whom I preached. In my zeal to carry out the commission I failed to see that the commandment to love my brothers and sisters came first.

From Mondo I learned that walking in the light means a total sharing of my secrets with my sisters and brothers. Christ spoke to his disciples, *"I no longer call you servants; a servant knows not the secrets of his Lord, but I have shared with you the secrets of my Father"* (John 15:15). When we share our secrets, there is a total identification with one another.

We have a reciprocal bond. When a body of Christians begins to walk in the light together, there is no room left for gossip. Walking in the light puts gossip out of business. Nothing needs to be talked over in secret which is already in the light. Gossip is converted into efforts to seek solutions together. Instead of majoring on a brother's weakness, we can defend him where he is weakest and promote him where he is strong.

I knew that, if it was up to me, I could never walk in the light with my brother or sister. Gradually I realized that walking in the light was not so much what I was able to do but what Christ had made me to be—a light, or better still, a lighted candle. I understood this best when I considered the African hurricane lamp. In order for its light to shine, this lamp requires a clean glass, a trimmed wick, and unpolluted oil. If the glass is dirty, the light is faint. If the wick is untrimmed, the light flickers. And if the oil is contaminated, the light grows dim and eventually dies.

Fig. 10-7



Many a Christian life would like to shine *without* being transparent and *without* being trimmed. In Matthew 5 there is a whole list of things which contaminate the oil: sinful anger, lust, contention, and evil hatred towards one's enemies. Without pure oil, we cannot be a light, and we cannot live transparent lives before our brothers.

When we cannot be a light, we cannot walk in the light. When we cannot walk in the light, we pile sin upon sin. There is anger and resentment instead of reconciliation. There is lust instead of love, contention instead of contentment, concealment where there should be confession, and bitterness where there should be forgiveness.

Every time I lose an argument with my wife, I feel I am ready for a divorce. But, beyond the argument, I can recognize that Christ, through his blood, has paid the price for my marriage. My identity has been paid for. It no longer depends upon winning or losing an argument. So every day when I am ready to swear and curse, I know Jesus paid for my peace. Instead of going to fight Judas, I go to wash his feet. I was saved by grace, and grace will sustain me in all my relationships.

But we are mistaken if we believe—as I think perhaps many in the Revival Fellowship did—that confessing our sins one to another is *the whole* of walking in the light.¹ To walk in the light is to renounce all the works of evil and to manifest the fruit of the spirit which are the greatest work of grace in our lives.

**‘LOVE — JOY — PEACE — PATIENCE —
KINDNESS — GENTLENESS — FAITHFULNESS—
GOODNESS — SELF-CONTROL’**

It is a work of grace which fills my heart with humility and compels me to seek forgiveness from my brother. It is a work of grace of which makes me restless until I can forgive him. But no matter how spiritual I *feel* confessing my sin to a brother in my devotional group, if I am not *practicing* the whole counsel of God, I am not “walking in the light.” As to this “walking. . .”

The God whom we serve, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, has identified Himself not only as the Father of sinners, but the Father of *orphans*. He is the defender of widows, the liberator of prisoners. He gives food to the hungry and justice to those who are denied it (Psalm 68:5, 146:7). And He has commanded his church to do the same:

‘Let the weak and the orphans have justice, be fair to the wretched and destitute; rescue the weak and needs, save them from the clutches of the wicked.’ — Psalm 82: 3,4

One who suppresses God’s truth for the poor and oppressed is in as much spiritual darkness as the one who live in a perpetual state of unconfessed sin. If it is a work of grace to humbly confess my sin, it is likewise a work of grace to walk among the broken down houses of my community and to be touched by the poverty of those who dwell there.

If it is a work of grace to feel restless until I am reunited with a sister against whom I have sinned, it is likewise a work of grace to feel restless until justice is restored to my neighbors. It is a work of grace to become a part of the healing ministry which brings God’s truth to the poor and the oppressed.

But we must remember that, before we are light to our neighbors and to the world, we are first a light to the home. Unless we are a light to one another—to our families and to the body of believers to which we belong—we will not shine at all. The light that is in us will turn to darkness. If we are to avoid the futility which comes when the blind lead the blind, if we are truly to walk in the light with one another, we must first be *broken*.

There is a popular expression among the fellowship that describes this disposition in the life of an individual. The Ugandan word is *okumenyeka*. There is no word just like it in English. It refers to a “broken” individual. To be broken is to have no pride, for where there is pride, there is no confession and no forgiveness. To heal a broken relationship, one must be broken; one must be willing to “give in”; one must not find his or her identity in always being in the right.

When Jesus fed the five thousand, He took the five loaves of bread, blessed them, broke them, and gave them to the disciples to give away (Matthew 14:19). One brother of the Revival read this verse and then looked at me. “Until God breaks your will, he will never use you,” he said. “You will only remain a nice loaf of bread.” What Jesus did in feeding the multitude was very symbolic of what was going to happen to His body. To His own disciples He said, “This is my body which is broken for you.”

Unless we are broken, we are of no use to God. And unless we are broken, we are of no use to the community of believers of which we are a part. Hardly any of us can go to his own Christian community and say, “*This is my body which is broken for you. I am laying all my professional skills, abilities, and economic resources at your disposal. Take them and use them as you see fit.*” We cannot say this, because we are not broken. We are too proud to give our lives away to people who are not perfect. We don’t want to lose ourselves for sinners. We dream of finding the perfect person and the perfect community to meet our needs, but we never do find them. So, like Judas, we make only a partial commitment to the body of believers to which we belong, and we find our identity in our *rebellion from them*. Then, unlike Paul who clearly saw his identity as “an apostle of Jesus Christ”

—in terms of his function *in the body*, we see our identity in how we are *different* from the body and *opposed* to it.

If we are following Jesus, we cannot wait for the perfect community. It was while we were yet sinners that Christ allowed His body to be broken for us. Jesus lays the foundation for community life in the midst of betrayal: *"the Lord Jesus Christ, the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread..."* He gave thanks and broke it and gave it. Our commitment to one another in the community can be no less than His: *"This is my body broken for you."*

Without the crucifixion of our pride, we will always consider ourselves too inadequate to feed our brothers and sisters in community. We will never want to run the risk of trying, because we have a secret anxiety that we will fail. Jesus said to His disciples, *"Give to the people to eat."* The disciples' reaction was that what they had was not sufficient. Still Jesus told them to *"go and see"* (Mark 6:38). He knew that the Father was sufficient.

The problem is that we fail to realize that it is the small things—a few loaves of bread or a widow's little oil—that God wants us to place in His hands. God asked Moses, *"What is that in your hand?"* Moses knew it was only a poor shepherd's stick. He knew he was only a poor shepherd. God wanted Moses in His service, but Moses could not believe that God would use the weak and base things of the world to declare His glory.

I know how my wife and I once tried to avoid God's call. We had only narrowly escaped death in Uganda and had come to seminary in the United States. Before long we started getting letters from our fellow refugees in Nairobi asking for help. At first we tried to ignore them. We hardly had enough for ourselves; how could we give to other refugee families?

Gradually the truth about Christ started to take hold of our lives. Christ was broken for us. He would take the little we had and bless it. He was not asking us to set up a refugee fund for thousands of people; He was only asking that we be faithful with what we had. As we started to give, the miracle of the loaves took place. What we had thought was barely

enough to feed ourselves became, through the Father's sufficiency, food and housing for many refugees.

We are broken for the community, and in community we are broken. In community we can no longer stand aloof and protect ourselves, we can no longer be *"spiritually uncorrectable."* As we walk in the light with one another, as we repent and confess, our pride is no longer in control of our actions. We are empowered by the Holy Spirit, and together we are given to the world.

In that giving we are broken again. We are broken by a renewed sense of our own inadequacies, and we are broken by the very people we are trying to help. In 1971 with help from Dutch believers, we opened up an orphan home in Uganda. It was always a discouraging and humiliating experience to go to a village and pick up an orphan. As I would drive away, ten other orphans would be chasing behind me until they gave up, exhausted.

It then began to hurt... *"Lord, why am I taking one when there are ten others? Can't you give me a chance to save them all?"* But then in the deep silence of my frustration, I would feel the conviction of The Master say, *"This is the one I wanted you to take."* God wanted to teach me then of my own inadequacy and of His love for me. The need was clearly far greater than all my resources. My limitations, in light of the enormity of the evil I saw, began to haunt me. I felt useless in God's Kingdom. I was humbled and broken by my own expendability. And, it was then that I knew that God loved me, for it was not just my service He wanted; *He wanted me.*

When we are broken by grace to serve God's people, we find that our brokenness is only a beginning. Christ gave Himself for us in humility and lowliness. The very people He came to save responded to His sacrificial giving by crucifying Him. His best friends abandoned him when things stopped going well. But somehow we have been led to believe that our lot should be different than our Master's! We have forgotten that no servant is greater than his master and that our Master died on the cross—despised and rejected by men. So when we give ourselves to others, we are discouraged to the point of giving up when things

go wrong. When we begin to be broken for our neighbors and find our efforts being hindered by the very people we are trying to help, we want to abandon them to Satan. We want to say,

'Lord it wasn't these sinners I wanted to die for! Isn't there someone else; someone more grateful, more talented; someone that will make me feel more successful in your kingdom?'

Our questions become the masks behind which we hide our disobedience and our unwillingness to follow and die with the Lord Jesus Christ who gave Himself for *sinners*.

But, as we keep our eyes fixed on Jesus and thereby learn to abide in Him, in that relationship we learn to live in obedience to Him and be broken for others. We find that God is not concerned to make us Christian success stories. It is not our reputation and successful service God wants. He wants us. He wants hearts that are humble. He wants a community of believers that is faithful. He wants a people who can say with their lives: ***"This is my body which is broken for you."*** It is then and only then that we can know the hope of glory, the crucified, resurrected, risen and reigning Christ.

— AMEN! —

'AN IMPORTANT FOOTNOTE

We need to acknowledge thing our Ugandan author alluded to on page S10-17. It grieves us to report this, but according the accounts of people from Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda who have been or are presently associated with the East African Revival, a spirit of legalism and pride eventually crept into the movement which has dealt a serious blow to its testimony and its effectiveness for Christ.

The first sign of degeneration was that the public repentance, once a sign of true brokenness, became a badge of honor to be earned and boasted in. Eventually, they say, the public repentance (in many places, though not all) became a sham—a mask behind which all manner of impurity was hidden.

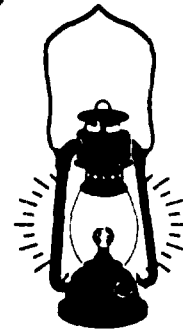
Presently I am serving as the faculty reader for a woman student at NIST (Nairobi International School of Theology) who was raised in the East African Fellowship on the Kenya coast. She is a candidate for the Masters of Biblical Counseling degree, and has a special burden for counseling individuals and families who have been damaged by the excesses in that movement. Her thesis title is: **"BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES OF COUNSELING LEGALISTIC BELIEVERS WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO LEGALISTS IN THE EAST AFRICAN REVIVAL MOVEMENT"**

With that said, a word of caution is in order. What has befallen the movement should not be taken as an indictment of the practice of public confession. On the contrary, it is a sad commentary on the power of the "religious 'esh" to corrupt a good thing. Public repentance is now, as it has been throughout the history of the Church, one of the marks of true revival. Without such humility, our Christian fellowships easily degenerate into collections of self-righteous people who are *"thankful they are not like other men."*

Since in SONSHIP training we encourage public repentance, what can protect us against falling into these kinds of abuses ourselves? Only the Gospel! If we will keep just these two things in even reasonable balance—the knowledge of our sin, and the righteousness of Jesus—our faith will remain fresh, our churches alive, and our fellowship with one another honest. ***So, in our praying, preaching, worshipping, and yes, our repenting, let us not forget the Gospel!***

Worthy Is the Lamb!

— JW Long —



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Graphics by J. W. Long, Jr.

REPENTANCE WORKSHOP

Suggested Reading: *REPENTANCE AND 20TH CENTURY MAN* by Dr. C. John Miller

1. Write a definition of "brokenness."

2. Write in detail about ONE of your repentances over some sin in a personal relationship. Think of some close relationship—a roommate, family member, or spouse. THEN ASK YOURSELF: "How does my repentance measure up to the definition of true repentance in this lesson?"

3. LIST 3 specific THINGS or AREAS of your life where you believe God wants to lead you to repentance so that you'll know more joy, and he will receive more glory.

a.

b.

c.

4. LIST two very specific FRUITS that should follow your repentance for each of those.

a. 1)

2)

B. 1)

2)

C. 1)

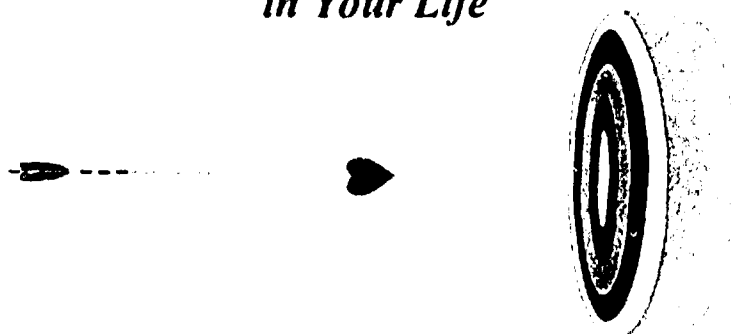
2)

5. How will repentance and evangelism be related in your daily life?



The Love Project

*Aiming to Love the Difficult People
in Your Life*



THE LOVE PROJECT

AIMING TO LOVE

The Difficult People In Your Life

FINAL
EXAM

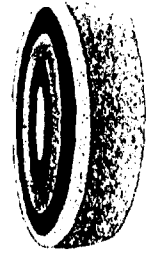


Fig. 11-2

INTRODUCTION: Before we can disciple our children, parishioners or students to love like Jesus, it is imperative that we have begun to love others like Jesus. That is the purpose of this assignment—to stir us up to love. We chose the words *“have begun to love”* carefully, because in Romans 13, Paul makes it clear that loving others is the one debt we owe that we can never pay off. (vss. 8-10)

Most of us do a poor job of loving others because the objects we have to love are sinners—and only God loves sinners perfectly. But to grow as Christians is to grow in love! Paul wrote to the Galatian churches, *“For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision has any value; the only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love”* (Gal. 5:6). “The only thing that counts?” That is a radical statement, and it underscores why we call this lesson “the final exam” of SONSHIP. Love is serious business. Hopefully as you do this project, the Holy Spirit will begin to uncover some of the flaws in your primary relationships. Pray for that, and when he answers, rejoice, because it will be a sign that he is beginning a grand new work in your life.

How do we know if our faith is “expressing itself through love?” One of the most famous comic strips in the USA is “PEANUTS” by Charles Schultz, an Evangelical Christian. Linus and Lucy (his nasty-tempered big sister) are regulars. Here, Lucy has just ridiculed Linus for his dream to become a doctor...

Fig. 11-3¹



PEOPLE! Ahh....that is the rub. Love is a beautiful idea—until we have to love somebody.

CAN YOU DISCERN BETWEEN THE ROLES OF: Faith, the Holy Spirit, Obedience and Love in the passage below? And, count the number of times John uses the word *love* (in any form).

DEAR FRIENDS, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. 8 Whoever does not love does not know God, Because God is love. 9 This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. 10 This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. 11 Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. 12 No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us.

We know that we live in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit.

14 And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world. 15 If anyone acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God, God lives in him and he in God. 16a And so we know and rely on the love God has for us.



¹ Fig. 11-3: Courtesy of PEANUTS TREASURY by Charles Schultz, Holt, Rhinehart, Winston, New York, 1968

God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in him. 17 In this way, love is made complete among us so that we will have confidence on the day of judgment, because in this world we are like him. 18 There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love.

We love because he first loved us. 20 If anyone says, "I love God," yet hates his brother, he is a liar. For anyone who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen. 21 And he has given us this command: Whoever loves God must also love his brother.

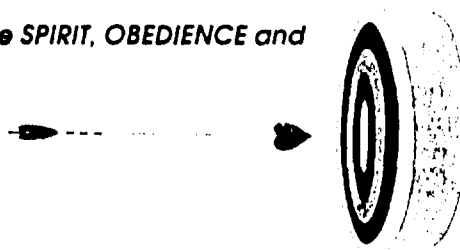
Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and everyone who loves the father loves his child as well. 2 This is how we know that we love the children of God: by loving God and carrying out his commands. - 1 John 4:7-5:2 (NIV)

It is impossible to imagine how John could have stressed the importance of love any more strongly! How many times has he used the word "love?"

(_____ times)

Fig. 11-4

HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE the relationship of FAITH, The SPIRIT, OBEDIENCE and LOVE in these verses?



IT IS POSSIBLE TO TEST THE QUALITY OF OUR LOVE! You just have to know where to look —

1. **Examine the ways** you are (or are not) showing love in your closest relationships—your spouse, children, parents, in-laws, extended family, congregation, work relationships, etc. And, to help you look even closer —
2. **Examine the ways** you are using your tongue—how you talk to them or talk about them to others. These are the acid tests of our loving, and therefore the tests of true Christlikeness.

THINK IT OVER: WHO ARE THE THREE "MOST-DIFFICULT-TO-LOVE" PEOPLE IN YOUR LIFE?

(If you are married, consider your spouse as one of them!) If you are like your SONSHIP teachers, there will be times that you use your tongue to "punish" these people, sinfully express your displeasure in them, or otherwise demonstrate your lack of love to them. To be more specific, do you ever (a) talk to them in unkind ways, (b) talk about them to others, or, (c) Not talk to them at all—"freezing them out" of your life? Of course we may try to rationalize this by saying, "They deserve it!" The next two SONSHIP lessons, "**Forgiveness as a Way of Life**" (S-12), and "**Constructive Conflict**" (S-13), will help us see the fallacy in that excuse.

BUT HOW CAN YOU "CHANGE YOUR TONGUE?" There are only two ways we know about:

1. CUT IT OUT, or, 2. CONSTANTLY keep repenting & believing the Gospel so that your tongue becomes an instrument of love, healing and edification (rather than spite, wounding and tearing down). By "believing the Gospel," the fruit of the Holy Spirit will be released in our lives and we will have God's supernatural love for other sinners! Paul said that "**is the only thing that counts!**" He echoes this in Romans 13:8, "**He who loves his fellow man has fulfilled the law!**"

THE HEART AND GOAL OF SONSHIP: If faith is the heart of the SONSHIP course, bringing glory to God through our visible love for others is the goal. A failure to love is a failure in faith. Faith in Jesus never exists in a vacuum. If we are not reaching out in love toward people ("our neighbor") then faith is not operating in our lives. Full stop.

YES! The hard-to-love people in our lives are big sinners! Granted. But in Christ, we have a choice about what to do with that information! We can: 1. condemn them, 2. ignore them, or 3. love them. **When I refuse to love someone as Jesus loves, be they a family member, neighbor, or enemy, I seal them up "under the law," try them, convict them, and sentence them to my condemnation.** I write them off. Now there is no way I can "move redemptively" into their lives. Think about this: God knew we were big sinners, but what did he do with the information? *"But God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved!" (Eph. 2:4)* But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: *While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. (Rom. 5:8)* Now that is convicting!

To love as Jesus loves (Jn. 13:34ff) is to be "rich in mercy" like Jesus is rich in mercy. Let me be the first to admit that I would rather punish than forgive. I would rather squander the grace of God on myself. Why is that? Because, as we will see in the next lesson, when we choose to love rather than condemn, there is a death we die too! Of course it is not a redemptive death for their sins. Only Jesus can do that. But it is a death nonetheless—a death to our sinful urge to taste the sweetness of revenge—to hurt back. It hurts to love, and it hurts because the other person doesn't deserve it. Grace loves. **Grace costs us. Revenge costs them.**

FOR EMPOWERMENT TO LOVE, "PREACH THE GOSPEL TO YOURSELF."

Do you see why we must have the fruit of the Spirit by exercising Gospel faith to love? Love is unnatural. Revenge is natural—the flesh in overdrive. Neither you nor I can love on our own. If we are ever to be "rich in mercy," we will have to keep "preaching the Gospel to ourselves!" Meaning what? *It means that I keep reminding myself what Jesus chose to do with my sin—die for it*

- ◆ **The more I become like Jesus, the more I will love like Jesus** (Eph. 5:1,2)
- ◆ **The more I become like Jesus, the more I will move out of the role of perfect judge and in reliance on the Holy Spirit, move toward others with loving words and actions.**

No, I may not commit the exact sins as this hard-to-love person in my life—not outwardly. But I do daily break God's "Royal Law." (Matt. 22:36ff; Jas. 2:8ff) And, when I remember that, and "look at Christ" as he intercedes for me—covering me with his righteousness—I am empowered to love others! **This is very simple, and even more powerful!**

So, as we enter this exam—"THE NEVER-ENDING FINAL EXAM" of SONSHIP—let us believe the Gospel more so that we can love more. As we do, Jesus' High Priestly prayer in John 17:11 will be answered—that the church be one. When love comes, revival will have come indeed!

LOVE PROJECT INSTRUCTIONS: PART ONE

CHOOSE 3 DIFFICULT PEOPLE AS "LOVE-TARGETS"

NOTE: If you are married, put your spouse as number one. If you are single, choose a roommate or someone very close to you as number one. For the remaining two, you may want to choose from a special "people group" (a religion, race, or tribe) with a specific individual in it. **In all, choose three specific individuals who are difficult for you to love.**

WITH THESE THREE PEOPLE, ASK THE HOLY SPIRIT TO EMPOWER YOU TO:

PUT OFF . . .

1. dwelling on their sins and imperfections - Eph. 4:30 - 5:2
2. biting and devouring words (attack words) - Gal. 5:15
3. boasting and provoking words - Gal. 5:26



"The Teeth and Tongue"
An Adinkra Proverbial Symbol
Akan tribe, Ghana

Interpretation: The sharp teeth "live" with the soft tongue, but don't bite it. So don't "bite" one another.

Fig. 11-5

PUT ON . . .

1. **the Fruit of the Spirit** (Gal. 5:22) by **asking** for the Spirit (Lk. 11:13) whose fruit is love
2. **thanking** God for the positive qualities in these people
3. **listening** to their needs, and doing deeds of kindness for them
4. **forgiving** any wrongs they have committed against you
5. **speaking** to them about the forgiveness Jesus has given big sinners such as yourself



THANK YOU! PLEASE GO TO PAGES 5 THROUGH 7 AND COMPLETE THE "LOVE TARGET WORKSHEETS" - THEN return here to "INSTRUCTIONS: PART TWO."

INSTRUCTIONS: **PART TWO**

RETURN HERE ONLY AFTER YOU HAVE COMPLETED YOUR WORKSHEETS ON YOUR THREE "LOVE TARGETS."

Now, resolve in prayer to serve these 3 people in love.

We have purposed to pray for the three difficult people on our worksheets. But, be careful *what and how* you pray! Too often the purpose of our prayers for others is to try to convince God to change them for our benefit. Is that so wrong? Don't they need changing? Yes, but...

- 1) If we pray with **that attitude**, immediately we will start looking for the changes we expect to see in the other person. No wonder we are so quickly frustrated! *"My prayers aren't being answered!"* we will complain.

REMEMBER THE LOVE PROJECT IS A "LOVE THEM," NOT "CHANGE THEM" ASSIGNMENT!

- 2) Or worse, we may take matters into our own hands, and try to make the person change! Their response will usually be greater resistance to change! (This is especially true of us men when the women in our lives try to change us! We "dig in our heels" and refuse to budge—like jackasses!) And, when we try to pressure others to change, they may conclude that we are self-righteous, and they may be right! Give the Holy Spirit the room and the time he wants. **WITHDRAW** your application to be the Holy Spirit.

The alternative to this "CHANGE THEM" strategy should be obvious: I pray and ask God to change me! If we cooperate with the Holy Spirit, God will remove our unloving and unforgiving attitudes, our uncaring gestures and facial expressions and our spirit of demandingness.

LISTEN TO THIS: The method God will usually use to profoundly change the difficult people in our lives is to **change us before their very eyes!** When they see us being changed by the power of the Gospel, they may be struck with the thought that Christ could change them too!

This perspective transforms our prayer into something very exciting! Each morning we can "get in partnership with God" and ask the Spirit to give us his fruit in our relationships for that day. Then, we will be on the lookout for how God wants to work in us by His Spirit to enable us to really "keep the Law"—to love him with our whole heart, to love our neighbor as ourselves—and beyond that—to love as Jesus loves. (Jn. 13:34-36) ***This will draw people to Christ!***

NOW, GO BACK TO THE THREE WORKSHEET PAGES. Have you written down your "love strategies" for each of these people? (Be very specific!) Realize that these three people may never respond to you in a positive way. There are no guarantees. But God calls you to be an image-bearer of his Son—to reach out to them in love. So let's do that in the Holy Spirit's strength, and leave the results to him.

LOVE TARGET No. 1 _____

Before you begin writing, think:

- Does this person need to be converted? Is he/she really trusting in Jesus' righteousness?
- Or, is he/she a believer that has a tendency to forget the gospel—the way I tend to forget it?



Fig. 11-6

If they are lost, what is your plan for sharing Jesus with them? If they are a Christian, what is your plan for showing them how walking in the Spirit looks? Remember, only a personal relationship with Christ can change them. Now, work out your love strategy.

What do I need to **"put on"** in order to love this person the way Christ loves me? (p. 11-4)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

What do I need to **"put off"** in my relationship to this person? (What do I need to stop doing?)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

What is it that irritates me about this person? (the things that make him/her difficult to love)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

How am I like this person? (How do you share the same "root" sins, if not "surface" sins?)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

What are some **good** qualities in this person? (things I *tend* to overlook because of their sin)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Ask: "Father, what should be my **"LOVE STRATEGY"** with this person? ("Aim at nothing...")

WHAT I WILL DO

WHEN I WILL DO IT (day, month, year, time)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

LOVE TARGET No. 2 _____

Before you begin writing, think:

- Does this person need to be converted? Is he/she really trusting in Jesus' righteousness?
- Or, is he/she a believer that has a tendency to forget the gospel—the way I tend to forget it?



Fig. 11-6

If they are lost, what is your plan for sharing Jesus with them? If they are a Christian, what is your plan for showing them how walking in the Spirit looks? Remember, only a personal relationship with Christ can change them. *Now, work out your love strategy.*

What do I need to "put on" in order to love this person the way Christ loves me? (p. 11-4)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

What do I need to "put off" in my relationship to this person? (What do I need to stop doing?)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

What is it that irritates me about this person? (the things that make him/her difficult to love)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

How am I like this person? (How do you share the same "root" sins, if not "surface" sins?)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

What are some good qualities in this person? (things I tend to overlook because of their sin)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Ask: "Father, what should be my 'LOVE STRATEGY' with this person? ('Aim at nothing.')

WHAT I WILL DO

WHEN I WILL DO IT (day, month, year, time)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

LOVE TARGET No. 3 _____

Before you begin writing, think:

- Does this person need to be converted? Is he/she really trusting in Jesus' righteousness?
- Or, is he/she a believer that has a tendency to forget the gospel—the way I tend to forget it?

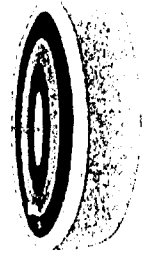


Fig. 11-6

If **they are lost**, what is your plan for sharing Jesus with them? If **they are a Christian**, what is your plan for showing them how walking in the Spirit looks? Remember, only a personal relationship with Christ can change them. *Now, work out your love strategy.*

What do I need to **"put on"** in order to love this person the way Christ loves me? (p. 11-4)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

What do I need to **"put off"** in my relationship to this person? (What do I need to stop doing?)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

What is it that **irritates me about this person?** (the things that make him/her difficult to love)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

How am I **like this person?** (How do you share the same "root" sins, if not "surface" sins?)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

What are some **good qualities in this person?** (things I *tend* to overlook because of their sin)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Ask: "Father, what should be my **"LOVE STRATEGY"** with this person? (*"Aim at nothing..."*)

WHAT I WILL DO

WHEN I WILL DO IT (day, month, year, time)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

THANK YOU! Please return to page 11-4 now and complete PART TWO.

Forgiveness as a Way of Life

Living as Imitators of God



Fig. 12-1

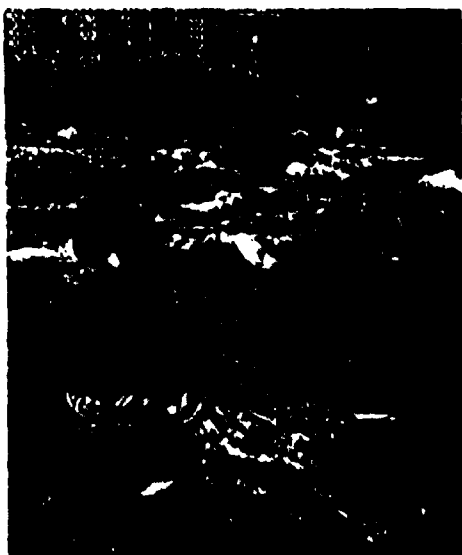


Fig. 12-2

The Rwandan Genocide and Radical Forgiveness

8-12
AFRICA

WHAT WOULD YOU DO if you came face to face with the man who had brutally murdered your spouse and children? In a Rwandan prison, a widow met the man who had killed her family, and their meeting moved their two hearts, their two tribes, and consequently their war-torn land closer together.

In 1994, a genocidal nightmare swept Rwanda, as age-old enmities erupted and as many as a million Tutsis and thousands of their Hutu sympathizers, were butchered. In 1995, in the aftermath of the massacre, Youth With A Mission (YWAM) staff arrived in the country to minister to those traumatized by the violence. And, they continue today, sharing the Gospel, offering vocational training to orphans, and sponsoring reconciliation seminars for local churches.

Mr. Arne Petersen, acting director of YWAM in East Africa was visiting a jail in the Rwandan capital of Kigali where many of those accused of the killings were being held for trial. One day after he had preached to the prisoners on forgiveness, he was approached by a Hutu inmate who had become a Christian during an earlier visit. The man was under the conviction of the Holy Spirit. Burdened down with bloodguilt (Psalm 51:14), He wanted to confess his sins.

Arne writes, *"He confessed that he had butchered his Tutsi neighbors—a father and his three children. The wife, he said, had somehow escaped. Now he wanted to know how he could contact the widow to ask for her forgiveness for what he had done."* Arne suggested to this prisoner that he write a letter of confession and repentance to the widow. The letter was written, and Arne promised to do his best to find her and hand-deliver the letter. He located her later that very week! She began to weep when she read the letter. She explained that after the massacres, she too had become a Christian—and that she had been praying for the man who had murdered her family!

Later, Arne was able to arrange an in-prison meeting between the killer and the widow. When the two met, they embraced as he begged her for forgiveness. Not only did she forgive him, but has been regularly returning to the cells to take food to supplement his meager diet.

Arne comments: *"This is what Christianity is all about—God's forgiveness—and us forgiving even our enemies! There are people in Rwanda who have forgiven and are forgiving their enemies. They are the ones that are going to bring God's forgiveness into the country to cleanse it and bring lasting peace."*



Fig. 12-1 Photo - Courtesy Time Magazine Multimedia Almanac CD-ROM - 1995
Adapted for SONSHIP for Africa from NEWS - Youth With A Mission - February 1997
Originally appeared in AFROSCOPE - an Evangelical Newsletter for the Church in Africa

FORGIVENESS AS A WAY OF LIFE

Living as Imitators of God

"Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours. And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive him, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins." Mark 11:24-25

INTRODUCTION: In his first letter, Peter the Apostle broadcasts an appeal for us Christians to love and forgive one another. "Above all," he writes, "love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins" (4:8). That sounds easy enough. But what about forgiving unbelievers—or our enemies? What do I do then?

To complicate matters further, there seem to be three types of forgiveness!

(a). One is quick and easy. We forgive someone we love so much that we don't want to hold a grudge!

(b). Then there is that hard-won forgiveness that comes only after much wrestling of the soul.

(c). The third type is much more difficult. Either the wounds are very old or deep, or, the person or persons keep on hurting us so that forgiveness must be an ongoing process—a battle re-fought in the heart over weeks or months or years.

But our circumstances deceive us. There is only one type of forgiveness, and Gospel faith is the key to it. After Jesus had forgiven the adulterous woman—the one who anointed his feet with perfume and tears—he told Simon the Pharisee, "...her many sins have been forgiven, for she loved much. But he who has been forgiven little loves little." (Lk. 7:47). There it is. Being forgiven begets love, and as Peter noted, "love covers a multitude of sins." The more we know how much we have been forgiven, the more we will love God. And, the more we love God, the more we will love and be able to forgive others.

Are we saying that forgiveness is cheap and easy? Never! But there was a time when my teaching on forgiveness sounded an accusatory note—"How dare you not forgive with all God has forgiven you!" These days, as the Gospel is giving me greater courage to look at my own heart, I can see that sometimes I would rather treasure my wounds than let them heal, or that I have incredible difficulty in forgiving—especially when it is Christians who hurt me.

So, as a sinner like you, who has had my share of agonizing and sleepless nights due to the wounds inflicted by others, let's study forgiveness together, and discover the power of the Gospel to lead us into what is perhaps the most God-like grace of them all.

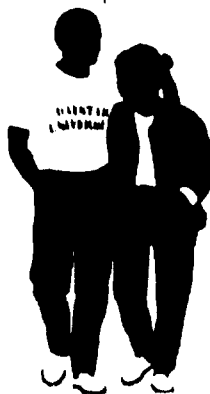



Fig. 12-3

AS WE BEGIN, HERE IS YOUR "FORGIVENESS ASSIGNMENT"

Think of the three people that you are having the most trouble forgiving right now. (Perhaps they coincide with the three subjects of your S-11 LOVE PROJECT!)

As we proceed through the lesson, *keep these people and the ways they have sinned—or are presently sinning against you—in mind.*

In that way, instead of this being a theoretical exercise, God's Spirit can use it to show you how the principles of the Gospel apply to your real-life hurts. **Page S12-9** begins a written exercise—a "Forgiveness Workshop." Try this: pray that the Holy Spirit will make you as big a *giver* as you are a *sinner*! 

I. THE IMPORTANCE OF FORGIVENESS

God demands it — and your spiritual health requires it.

A. GOD DEMANDS IT

The Great Forgiver demands that we, his forgiven ones, be forgiving ones. But how can God require me to forgive anybody? Isn't the sin committed against me my business—just between me and the sinner? No, and for **four** reasons:

1. When someone sins (even against us), he sins first and foremost against God.

God's Law has been violated—either the "Royal Law of Love" in general or the Ten Commandments in particular. Every sin concerns God. Think about this: In spite of the unthinkable evil David did to Uriah the Hittite, his wife and family and the Kingship of Israel, he prayed:

"Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight, so that you are proved right when you speak and justified when you judge." — Psalm 51:4

2. And, not only has God's Law been violated, the person his Law was intended to protect (you) has been hurt. *God cares about you.* He has a double claim on your life: you were created in his image, and have been adopted into his family. It cost the cross for you to become his. Your Father cares about you and how people treat you. He is even more concerned about the sins people commit against you than you are!

ILLUSTRATION: Can you remember a time when a bully hit somebody you loved? I can. My little brother Jimmy (8) and I were playing with Donny, a neighbor, in our back yard. Donny hit Jimmy on the forehead with a board that had a nail in it—on purpose. For a moment we stood there in shock, but when blood began to stream down Jimmy's forehead, the bully glanced over at me and broke into a dead run. Jimmy wasn't hurt badly, but I chased the bully down and gave him a beating he would never forget. Forgiveness was the last thing on my mind, and clearly, *I was far more concerned for Jimmy than Jimmy!*

Like we said, your Heavenly Father is far more concerned about you than you!

If you have suffered some terrible abuse at the hands of others, this may be difficult for you to believe, but the Day of Judgment will reveal it. *Be comforted:* all sin and how it is handled is God's business. We do nothing in a vacuum, and as Judge of all the earth, God has ruled that for every sin, a payment must be made—either by the sinner or the Savior. Non-Christian "bullies" will pay their eternal debt to God for hurting you.

But what about "CHRISTIAN bullies?" Does God let them get away with their sin? No, for believers who sin against you, on this side of heaven, the Father has a two-part plan: he chastens the disobedient son or daughter (Heb. 12:5f), and moves you to forgive them (and hopefully be reconciled to them). — Matt. 5:43f; Matt. 18:15-18

3. The third factor has to do with God's sense of justice and fairness. God is daily and hourly forgiving us our sins, and so demands that we forgive the sins of others.

Consider the following...

a. **The Lord's Prayer** - Matt. 6:12,14,15 "Lord, forgive us our sins in the same way we have forgiven those who have sinned against us." (St. Augustine called vs. 12 "The Awful Petition")

b. **The Parable of the Unmerciful Servant** - Matt. 18:21-35 (Note especially vs. 35) (text on next page)

"Therefore, the kingdom of heaven is like a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. 24 As he began the settlement, a man who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him. 25 Since he was not able to pay, the master ordered that he and his wife and his children and all that he had be sold to repay the debt.

26 "The servant fell on his knees before him. *'Be patient with me,'* he begged, *'and I will pay back everything.'* 27 The servant's master took pity on him, canceled the debt and let him go.

28 "But when that servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii*. He grabbed him and began to choke him. *'Pay back what you owe me!'* he demanded.

29 "His fellow servant fell to his knees and begged him, *'Be patient with me, and I will pay you back.'*

30 "But he refused. Instead, he went off and had the man thrown into prison until he could pay the debt. 31 When the other servants saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed and went and told their master everything that had happened.

32 "Then the master called the servant in. *'You wicked servant,'* he said, *'I canceled all that debt of yours because you begged me to.'* 33 *Shouldn't you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you?'* 34 In anger his master turned him over to the jailers to be tortured, until he should pay back all he owed.

35 **"This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother from your heart."** ¹ See MONEY NOTES FROM THE PARABLE - page S12-9

DISCUSS: Is Jesus teaching that we can earn our forgiveness by forgiving others? If not, what is he saying?

YOUR NOTES:

Our idea is this: Jesus is saying that one sure sign that we have been truly forgiven is that we have new hearts that forgive others. He is very clear: If we are not forgiving others, we have no right to assume that we have been truly converted. If we are not practicing forgiveness toward others, we need to remember the sobering discussion we had in S-6 (page S6-3) by taking seriously and acting immediately on Paul's command:

"Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves. Do you not realize that Christ Jesus is in you—unless, of course, you fail the test?" — 2 Cor. 13:5

4. We are called to be "imitators of God." (Eph. 4:29-5:2 - *μιμηταὶ τοῦ Θεοῦ* - mimics of God ("mimes")) In what specific ways are we to imitate God's forgiveness? Colossians 3:12 says that we are to "clothe ourselves" in compassion, kindness, gentleness, patience and forgiveness—all godly qualities. Then Paul adds, *"Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you"* (3:13).

And where does our ability to forgive come from? From the same source as the Father's ability to forgive us—the cross of Christ. And, note that those who forgive manifest the fruit of the Spirit! So, when we forgive, our heart is mimicking God's heart, and our actions his actions.

B. OUR SPIRITUAL HEALTH DEMANDS IT

When we are sinned against but don't forgive, we have only two ways to deal with the hurt: *bury it or dwell on it.* "Burying" the hurt is fake forgiveness. It doesn't take the sin to the Gospel. The result will be that the sin will "rise from the dead" at some point, and as we dwell on it, the hurt will turn to bitterness. *Bitterness never sleeps.*

The unforgiving heart is like a whistling "steam kettle" in which the pressure builds until it finds an outlet, "defiling many." (Heb. 12:14; Jas. 3:5ff) Our tongues are like the "alarm" for a wounded heart. Spiritually speaking, the root of our tongue is in our heart—not at the back of our throats. So, if we don't forgive, we will talk to someone else about the situation (complaining), or talk to them about the offender (gossip). Now we have a second problem—us! Anger, bitterness, self-righteousness, slander and gossip are forms of revenge that breed in an unforgiving heart to poison our relationship with God and others. (See page S12-15,16 for the story of Corrie Ten Boom, a Dutch survivor of the Nazi Holocaust.)

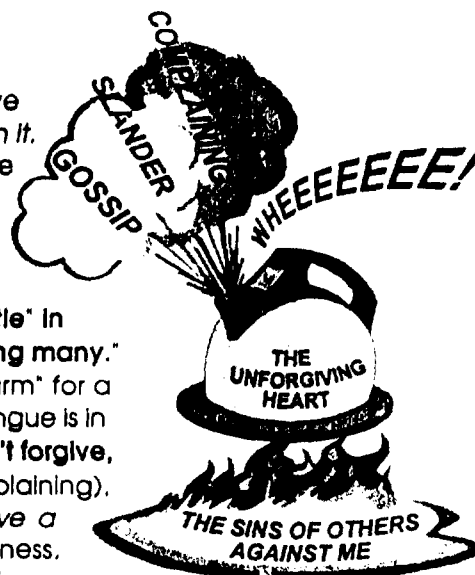


Fig. 12-4

II. FORGIVENESS DEFINED

When God tells us to forgive, what exactly is he telling us to do?

A. WHAT IS FORGIVENESS? Forgiveness is giving grace, and it is all of grace.

SIMPLY DEFINED, FORGIVENESS IS: my releasing the guilty person from the punishment due for their sins against me—just as the Father releases me from the punishment due for my sins against him.

Dr. Raymond Pendleton, professor of Pastoral Counseling at Gordon-Conwell Seminary observes that our forgiveness, like God's, is a gift of grace. He says:

"FORGIVENESS IS A GIFT THAT I, THE WOUNDED PARTY, GIVE to the one who has sinned against me. It is a precious gift, a costly gift! It is costly, because when I give it, it means that I must bear the pain of the other person's sin. I literally 'give away the treasure' of my hurt, the thing that I could use to get back at them in the future."

Some people, he notes, literally hold onto their hurts like a treasure, but it is only "Fool's Gold." It has no real value, and no power except to wound, embitter and destroy.

B. TESTS OF TRUE FORGIVENESS Dr. Jay Adams gives us this threefold test.

Can we say to the offender about their sin against us . . .

1. **I will not mention it to you again.** (*Διὰβολος* - "to hurl against" - "The Accuser")

2. **I will not dwell on it myself.** (Phil. 4:4-8 - We are to dwell on the good and lovely.) To "dwell on" a sin against you is to rehearse it over and over in your mind—to hold it against the person. God *remembers* our sins (and the Bible records them), but he does not *"remember them against us,"* i.e. impute their guilt to us. — Jer. 31:34

3. **I will not mention it to others.** (Gossip: "confessing someone else's sins" — J. Miller)

III. WHY DO WE HAVE DIFFICULTY FORGIVING OTHERS? SIX PROBLEMS...

We have difficulty forgiving because. . .

- A. We are reluctant to pay the high price forgiveness demands—to bear the pain the other person's sin has caused us.**

This is the ROOT of our unwillingness to forgive. We don't want to "be like Christ." We want to retain the right to exact punishment. Forgiveness is costly. It killed Jesus. He had to bear the pain of our sin in himself. Our forgiveness is not redemptive, but it still hurts to bear the sins of another by forgoing the right of vengeance. Vengeance feels good!

Forgiveness *offends* our sense of justice, but the flesh *perverts* our sense of justice! Like the unmerciful servant, we are eager to receive mercy and accept forgiveness, but slow to show mercy and extend forgiveness to others. But Matthew 6:14 is very serious. *Unwillingness to forgive is the same thing as inviting judgment.*

- B. We are very aware of other people's sins, but unaware of our own.**
"Specks and Beams" — Matthew 7:3-5 **THINK OVER AND DISCUSS:**

1. Can I truly love another person until I have forgiven them?
2. Is it possible to *love* someone I *fear*? (1 John 4:18 "There is no fear in love...")
3. How does my forgiving someone demonstrate the power of the Gospel to them?

- C. We are unaware that unforgiveness can be inherited from others.**
Racism and tribalism are tragic examples.

Our parents, extended family, clan or tribe may have taught us from childhood that the people of another group are "bad" because of their nationality, the color of their skin, their tribal customs, or because of offenses committed by this group recently—or even many generations ago.

Notice that we would not personally know to "hate" unless we were carefully taught. These people different from us have never offended us personally, but we eye them with suspicion because we have been trained to. (And we tend to magnify their faults and minimize those of our own group.) This is called, *"taking up the offenses"* of others.

SOME EXAMPLES: The tensions between *Bantus* (*Kikuyus, Kambas, etc.*) and *Luos* in Kenya over circumcision; tribal rivalries between the *Tigray, Oromo* and *Amhara* in Ethiopia; ethnic warfare between the *Tutsis* and *Hutus* in Rwanda, Burundi and Zaire; or the racism between white and black Americans in the USA.

DISCUSS: *What is the root sin that produces the fruit of tribalism?* (See p. S5-4 for help)

YOUR NOTES:

D. We say to ourselves, "They should know not to do that!"

DISCUSS: Even if someone plans to sin, does he really know what he is doing? Does he have God's perspective regarding his action?

CONSIDER THIS: Sin is self-deceiving. It blinds us to how horrible it is. Consider the men who crucified Jesus.

1. **1 Corinthians 2:8** *"None of the rulers of this age understood this, for if they had known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory."*
2. **Luke 23:34** *"Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing."*
(How could they not have known? They carefully plotted his betrayal and death!)

The truth is, that if people really knew what they were doing (if they had God's eyes), they would not do it! (If that sounds odd, you probably missed the point. Think about it.) But sin blinds us. Seeing this truth may help you be more merciful to someone who has hurt you. Like those who crucified Jesus, they do not really see what they have done.

E. We forget that only *daily believing the Gospel* can empower us to forgive.

The CROSS OF CHRIST is more than just a beautiful example of forgiveness!

What *is* the Gospel? In its simplest form: *"Jesus died for sinners."*

STEP ONE: (Left foot) *"I am a big sinner."*

STEP TWO: (Right foot) *"I have a big savior."*

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS of keeping these two "steps" current in our thinking?

YOUR NOTES:

F. Multiple Offenses

We grow weary of being hurt by the same people in the same ways, and we find it hard to acknowledge if and when real progress is being made.

EXAMPLE: A husband used to "blow up" at his wife, without fail, twice a day. Now he only does it every six months. But, on those now rare occasions, his wife cries out.

"SEE! YOU'RE JUST THE SAME! NOTHING HAS CHANGED!"

Dr. Pendleton notes that some people seem to expect the offender to turn back the clock and relive the past without repeating the offenses—impossible, of course.

Just after Jesus taught his disciples about the procedure for restoring sinners (Matt. 18:15-18), Peter brought up the issue of multiple offenses: (Matt. 18:21,22) "Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, 'Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother when he sins against me? — Up to seven times?' Jesus' answer was shocking! 'I tell you, not seven times, but seventy times seven!' And, to make sure that Peter could not dodge the issue, Jesus told **"The Parable of the Unmerciful Servant."** We know the parable well, but don't often remember the context in which Jesus told it. (We have the text of the parable back on p. S12-5 — Matt. 18:23-35.)

QUESTION FOR DISCUSSION: Regarding these multiple offenses, isn't God being unreasonable in expecting us to keep on forgiving? Why or why not? Cite Scripture to make your point. Think through the parable, and compare the number of your multiple offenses against God to the number of this other person's sins against you. *Jesus compared two vastly different amounts of money to illustrate this to Peter:*

• **MONEY NOTES FROM THE PARABLE:** A denarius was a copper coin, and represented a laborer's daily wage. A "talent" was not a coin, but a set weight of silver or gold. One silver talent represented about 6,000 denarii—approximately 20 years of labor using the Jewish 6-day work week! The Unmerciful servant owed 10,000 talents, his servant, 100 denarii. Figure out the difference.

IV. OUR PART IN THE PROCESS OF FORGIVENESS

IMPORTANT: *Forgiveness cannot be given and maintained by simply "following steps!"*

Forgiveness is the natural fruit of a healthy relationship with the Father in which we consciously rely on the Holy Spirit to do the humanly impossible—to love and forgive others just as God continually loves and forgives us.

FACT: *People willing to see themselves as Big Sinners are willing to be Big Forgivers!*

A. Remember the wrongs and hurts you have been keeping in your heart.

Ask the Holy Spirit to help you uncover these things. Include whatever has caused you you (or is causing you) to be: annoyed, angry, bitter, disappointed or troubled. Is there anyone you are bitter towards, strongly dislike, want to avoid being near, or even hate? (**Make a list**, but remember that the purpose here is not to open old wounds that have healed, but to find and heal the open ones.)

NOTE: You may discover these five situations, and possibly more. (Take notes.)

1. **The hurts they have asked forgiveness for** *but you have not let go of*
2. **The hurts they are unaware of** *that you have not yet told them about*
3. **The hurts they have refused to ask forgiveness for** *even after you have told them*
4. **The unfulfilled expectations you have for them** *(your legitimate, unmet needs)*
Beware: you may have unjust expectations of others that have become demands. These need to be seen for what they are—sins that need to be repented of.)
5. **The "old bones"** — *hurts inflicted long ago by those now dead or impossible to find*

B. Now, preach the Gospel to yourself! (Seek the *benefits* you listed in S12-8, E.)

Remember: the power to forgive others comes from the same source as your forgiveness—the cross of Christ. Now it is time to "imitate God!" — Eph. 4:29ff

1. **ONE: Yes, I am a very big S** ____ **ER** (1 John 1:8; Rom. 7: 15-19; 1 Tim. 1:15)
"If God were to count my sins against me, I would be lost and on my way to hell. If this person who sinned against me had a record of all my sins—my outward actions and inner thoughts—he would be shocked! There has never been one day—or hour—that I have loved and lived like Jesus."
2. **TWO: But, I have a very big S** ____ **ORI** Luke 7:36-50 (vs. 47) "By faith my sin has been nailed to the cross, and I'll bear it no more, praise the Lord, praise the Lord, Oh my soul! It is well with my soul, for I am clothed in C ____ T'S righteousness. Therefore I can and will freely forgive this person!"

C. Accept that God is sovereign over your life!

*Complaining is a sin rooted in our rebellion against the suffering that our sovereign God is allowing into our lives. Submit to him. Trust him. He loves you. **He is a good Abba!***

D. Let go of your role as "victim."

We cannot emphasize the importance of this enough. Why? Because when we see ourselves as victims, we lose sight of Christ and our own need of forgiveness. Victims want understanding and sympathy—full stop. Yes, we may have been the victims of very grievous sins. We do not want to minimize that in the least. But if we insist on holding on to the victim role, we will not be able to see our own sin and live lives of repentance. What's worse, many people who cling to the victim role become victimizers of others.

We must let go of our victim self-image so that we can seek forgiveness and cleansing from our own sins. (If you don't see any sins, rethink the quality of your loving.) ... you have been holding on to the role of victim, *give it up!* **Then the refreshing streams of grace can begin to flow in your life again.** Jesus will become precious to you again! *"He who has been forgiven much loves much."* — Lk. 7:47

E. Forgive each offense you have remembered (or listed) in "A" (S12-9).

Are there any offenses you are *unwilling* to forgive and let go of?

List them and take them to Christ.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

F. Release the offender. (Some people find it helpful to *burn the list!*)

Prayerfully in God's presence, do the following:

1. **Repent of your own sins of bitterness, anger and unforgiveness.**
2. **By faith, release the offender.** As you do, the Holy Spirit will begin to heal your heart so that you are released from bitterness and the desire to repay evil with evil. (1 Pet. 3:9)

SHIFT YOUR FOCUS: ***Now it is time to MOVE BEYOND FORGIVENESS!***

We use the phrase *"move beyond forgiveness"* because it reminds us that simply "forgiving" the person (canceling his punishment) is only the first step toward the real goal which is love.

G. Bless the Person in Prayer.

Yes, forgiveness is radical business—costly business! Is forgiveness that does not result in love is true forgiveness? Think of how God's forgiveness works in our lives. Are you ready to bless and pray for the one who injured you? (1 Pet. 3:9) Will you ask the Spirit to empower you to pray for each of the people who have hurt you? (Rom. 8:26)

Jesus, who loved us when we were his enemies tells us, "Love your enemies and pray for them." (Matt. 5:43-48) What can you pray for them? Pray for their conversion if they are

lost, and their repentance if they are a believer. Pray for reconciliation with them. Ask God to show them the same mercy he has shown you in Christ.

1 Peter 3:9-12 *"Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult, but with blessing, because to this you were called so that you may inherit a blessing. For, 'Whoever would love life and see good days must keep his tongue from evil and his lips from deceitful speech. He must turn from evil and do good; he must seek peace and pursue it. For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous and his ears are attentive to their prayer, but the face of the Lord is against those who do evil.'"* (Peter has quoted Ps. 34:12-16 here.)

H. Do good to the offender.

Develop "love strategies" to reach out to them. (See: your Love Project, S-12)

Romans 12: 19-21 *"Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: 'It is mine to avenge; I will repay,' says the Lord. On the contrary: 'If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head.'" (embarrass him into repentance) Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good."*

Remember, your goal is not just to forgive the person's wrong, but to love them by "moving redemptively" into their life! As a bonus, it is very likely that the feelings of love will follow your loving actions. (Matt. 5:44)

READ: The testimony of Corrie Ten Boom, WWII prisoner of the Nazis. (p. S12-15)

I. IMPORTANT: Keep your forgiveness *current*.

Personal Forgiveness is often a process rather than a one-time action. The wounds inflicted by the sins of others may not heal easily. The person may continue committing the same sin, or, their sins in the past might have ongoing consequences.

For instance: Murder robs you of a loved one; stealing leaves you poor; rape can result in a child; and other sins (like childhood sexual abuse) can cause deep and lasting emotional scars. In these cases, you may have daily reminders of the sin, and you will need to go to Christ for the power to forgive over and over again—each time the offense causes you pain.

V. SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES AND CONSIDERATIONS

NOTE: That we call some situations "special" does not imply that these merit us an exemption from forgiving. We mention these to acknowledge that the circumstances surrounding some sins are highly complex. Some offenses are violations of a purely personal relationship. Some sins have a wider impact when they violate the laws of higher authorities like the state or church.

A. Forgiveness without Reconciliation

God does not want us to pretend that we have not been sinned against. So, we need to make a clear distinction between forgiveness and reconciliation.

Forgiveness is a judicial action in which we pardon the sinner in obedience to the Gospel. But, what if there is no admission of guilt, no confession of sin, and no repentance on his part? (especially for grievous offenses that Christian love cannot—or should not—ignore - 1 Pet. 4:8)

If there is no repentance, there can be no reconciliation. Why? Because. . .

DISCUSS: What is the outcome when church officers are reluctant to take up matters of discipline as Jesus commanded?

- ◆ **What might motivate such reluctance?**

- ◆ **What would be the impact on the offended party (the complainant) in such cases?**

- ◆ **What impact would this "willing blindness" to sin have on the guilty party?**

- ◆ **What will be the impact on the Body of Christ (a) internally, and (b) before the world if such resistance to discipline persists?**

2. ECCLESIASTICAL OFFENSES

These should be taken into account:

- a. **the purity of the Church,**

- b. **the honor of Christ, and,**

- c. **the protection of His people from wicked men. (1 Cor. 5:1ff; Matt. 18:15ff)**

3. CIVIL OFFENSES

These should be taken into account: (Rom. 13:1-7)

- a. **the civil law,**

- b. **justice for the public, and,**

- c. **compensation for victims of crime, and the protection of society from future criminal behavior.**

VI. IN OBEDIENCE TO THE HOLY SPIRIT, WHAT FORGIVENESS DO YOU NEED TO EXTEND NOW?

A. Review page S12-9, 10. (where you have listed offenses)

Circle the items (from A to H) that God has convicted you about in PART IV, and briefly sketch out some specific steps you can take for each.

THE ACTION STEP	MY PLAN OF ACTION
A - Remember the wrongs...	
B - Preach the Gospel to yourself ...	
C - Accept God's sovereignty ...	
D - Give up your role as victim ...	
E - Forgive each offense ...	
F - Release the offender ...	
G - Bless the person in prayer ...	
H - Do good to the offender	

B. Now, for the glory of God—in the power of the Holy Spirit—with your eyes fixed on Jesus, your Great High Priest, take those steps. Forgive! Forgive as you have been and are this moment being forgiven for all your sins!

Would you like to write a prayer of forgiveness to God? Find a separate sheet of paper, so that it won't be in your manual for others to see. That way, you can make it very personal.

C. Remember the lessons of Ephesians 4:21-5:2, and Luke 7 . . .

Big Sinners who have a Big Christ are Big Forgivers!



I'm Still Learning to Forgive

by Corrie Ten Boom



Fig. 12-4

IT WAS IN A CHURCH in Munich where I was speaking in 1947 that I saw him—a balding heavyset man in a gray overcoat, a brown felt hat clutched between his hands. One moment I saw the overcoat and the brown hat, the next, a blue uniform and a visored cap with its skull and crossbones.

Memories of the concentration camp came back with a rush: the huge room with its harsh overhead lights, the pathetic pile of dresses and shoes in the center of the floor, the shame of walking naked past this man. I could see my sister's frail form ahead of me, ribs sharp beneath the parchment of skin... *"Betsie, how thin you were!"*

Betsie and I had been arrested for concealing Jews in our home during the Nazi occupation of Holland. This man had been a guard at Ravensbruck concentration camp where we were sent. It was the first time since my release that I had seen him and my blood seemed to freeze. Now he was in front of me, hand thrust out: *"A fine message, fraulein! How good it is to know that, as you say, all our sins are at the bottom of the sea!"* And I, who had spoken so glibly of forgiveness, fumbled in my handbag rather than take that hand!

"You mentioned Ravensbruck in your talk," he was saying. *"I was a guard there. But since that time,"* he went on, *"I have become a Christian. I know that God has forgiven me for the cruel things I did there, but I would like to hear it from your lips as well. Fraulein!"* again the hand came out, *"will you forgive me?"*

And I stood there—I whose sins had to be forgiven again and again—and could not forgive. Betsie had died in that place. Could he erase her slow terrible death simply for the asking? It could not have been many seconds that he stood there, hand held out, but to me it seemed hours as I wrestled with the most difficult thing I had ever had to do. For I had to do it—I knew that. The message that God forgives has a prior "condition"—that we forgive those who have injured us. *"If you do not forgive men their trespasses,"* Jesus says, *"neither will your Father in Heaven forgive your trespasses."*

I knew this not only as a command of God, but as a daily experience. Since the end of the war, I had had a home in Holland for the victims of Nazi brutality. Those who were able to forgive their former enemies were able also to return to the outside world and rebuild their lives, no matter what the physical scars. Those who nursed their bitterness remained invalids. It was as simple and horrible as that.

Fig. 12-5 Photo: Ohrdurf Concentration Camp, Germany - October 1945

Still I stood there with the coldness clutching my heart. But forgiveness is an act of the will, and the will can function regardless of the temperature of the heart. *"Jesus, help me!"* I prayed silently. *"I can lift my hand. I can do that much. You supply the feeling."* And so woodenly, mechanically, I thrust my hand into the one stretched out to me.

And, as I did, an incredible thing took place. The current started in my shoulder, raced down my arm, sprang into our joined hands. And then this healing warmth seemed to flood my whole being, bringing tears to my eyes.

"I forgive you, brother!" I cried. ***"With all my heart!"***

For a long moment we grasped each other's hands, the former guard and former prisoner. I had never known God's love so intensely as I did then. But even so, I realized it was not my love. I had tried and did not have the power. It was the power of the Holy Spirit as recorded in Romans 5:5:

"Because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit which is given unto us."

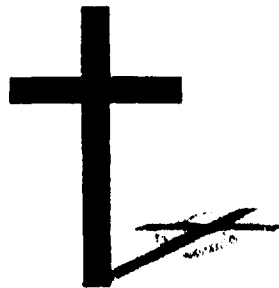


Fig. 12-6

CONSTRUCTIVE CONFLICT

*Leaning to Fight Like Christians. . .
so that God Wins*

AFRICAN PROVERBIAL WISDOM on Conflict

Fokupila batu hakutokwi wowo-wowo

Where there are people there is always conflict.
— a Lozi proverb, Zambia

Bila mtu wa pili ugomvi hauanzi.

Without a second person a quarrel cannot start.
— a Swahili proverb, Tanzania

Paliponse vikuni vukwesana

Wherever trees are, there is friction.
— a Tumbuka proverb, Zambia

Kuwa mbali kullana, kuwa karibu magombano.

There is weeping when separated, quarreling when together.
— Swahili proverb about families, Tanzania

Matako, aaliabili tabuli kucumbana

Where two buttocks are together there is always friction.
— a Tonga proverb, Zambia

Source: The African Proverbs Project, Global Mapping International
Collections, Studies, Biographies - CD-ROM, Ver. 1.0, 1996



Fig. 13-1

DAILY NATION

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Price KSh20/00

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NATIONAL NEWS

Man dies in church fight

TUESDAY, JUNE 3, 1997

By OLIVER MUSEMBI

A member of the African Christian Church and Schools was killed and several others injured when fighting erupted between two rival factions of the troubled church on Sunday.

The dead man, Edward Njuguna Thingi, 64, was stoned and slashed with pangas outside the Mung'aria Church in Kandara, Maragwa District.

He was taken to the Central Memorial Hospital, Thika, and he died on Sunday evening.

Pastor Meshack Kamau Muchoki, who was caught in the melee, sustained head injuries and was ad-

mitted to the Thika District Hospital, where he was operated on.

A worshipper, Mr Joseph Kimani Thuo, was treated at the St Mulumba Mission Hospital and discharged.

Trouble started when the two groups met at Mung'aria after an attempt to hold a service at Ndoga-mano Church in Kigumo Division was thwarted by the area District Officer, who deployed Administration Police officers to seal off the compound.

Members of the two groups, armed with whips, *rungus* and pangas attempted to take over the church by force, leading to a clash.

The Rev Muchoki said that he and a former moderator, the Rev James Ngugi Waithaka were stripped of their ceremonial gowns by rowdy youths, who stormed the church moments before the service could start.

He said that the mob hit him several times on the head before he was rescued by his supporters, who fought it out with the rival group for about 20 minutes.

The police went to the scene about 30 minutes later and found the groups had dispersed.

A police source said that a number of suspects had been arrested for questioning.

Christians fight in church

MONDAY, MARCH 17, 1997

By STEPHEN MUNYIRI

Riot police yesterday intervened in a fight between two groups at the Ragati Africa Independent Pentecostal Church of Africa in Karatina town.

One group is said to be loyal to Archbishop Benjamin Kahihia while the other is allied to Bishop Alexander Mugechia.

Trouble started at around 10 am when the Kahihia group, led by the entire Nyeri/Mukaro Diocese leadership, stormed the compound and besieged the Mugechia group which was holding a service in the church.

The service was disrupted when

Police Separate rival AIPCA groups

some Christians in the church shouted at the rival group, calling them names and daring them to enter the church. Fighting broke out when the pro-Mugechia group locked the church.

At least one man was injured when he was hit with a walking stick. Some of the worshippers carried knives and whips.

As the fight advanced, the pro-Kahihia group, which seemed to outnumber its rival, broke the lock and took control of the church, chasing away the other group.

The fight continued (cont. p. 2)

NEWSVIEW

in brief

Four Charged

FRIDAY, AUGUST 15, 1997

KAKAMEGA: Four members of the Church of the Province of Kenya's Maseno diocese were yesterday charged with the murder of a church member during a fight involving rival Christians at the St Stephen's parish last May. However, the accused, who appeared before Senior Resident Magistrate Andrew Osodo, were not required to plead to the charge as consent to prosecute had not been received.

(Christians fight, cont. from p. 1)
inside the church as rivals exchanged blows.

Amid booing and heckling from the pro-Mugechia group which had regrouped outside the compound, the Kahihia group threw out a group of clergymen who were holed up in the vestry.

Peace was restored when a Landrover full of riot policemen arrived 30 minutes later and ordered the group outside the church compound to disperse. The pro-Kahihia group then started its service.

The secretary of the Nyeri/Mukaro Diocese, the Rev. Paul Mirauri, said to be allied to the

Kahihia group, described the rival group as "power hungry thugs who have already been excommunicated."

He showed the congregation a copy of a certificate of registration indicating that members of the Kahihia group were the *bona fide* leaders. He claimed that the rival group had not been registered.

Archbishop Kahihia, the Church Patriarch-elect, while calling for peace between the warring factions, said he had recruited a team of "energetic" men to counter the other group.

The Archbishop, who is in his mid-80's, said he wished to see the church united before he dies.

Christians clash

TUESDAY, MARCH 25, 1997

NYERI: Several people were seriously injured yesterday when two church rival groups clashed. The Africa Independent Pentecostal Church of Africa groups fought after they met in the Mathakwaini church compound, Tetu Division.

Our special thanks to the *Daily NATION* for the articles and cartoon which appeared in its issues on the specified dates.

John W. Long, Jr.
SONSHIP for Africa



The Cartoon Caption

by NATION
Correspondent

Wed. Mar. 12, 1997

"The Pope's representative to Kenya, ProNuncio Giovanni Tonucci, says there is a good working relationship between Archbishop John Njenga of Mombasa and the priests calling for his removal. [Nepotism is another term for tribalism.]

"What causes these fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you? You want something but don't get it, so you kill and covet, and still don't get it! You quarrel and fight but don't get what you want because you don't ask God. And, when you do ask God, he doesn't answer because you ask with wrong motives. You squander everything you get on yourselves." — James 4:1-3

COMMENTARY: We wish these were fictional news stories, but they were taken *verbatim* from among scores of similar reports in the *Daily NATION*, Kenya's leading newspaper. Africa is not unique, of course. Gross sin occurs in the churches of America and Europe as well. But these are *ours*—living testimony to the destructive power of the "religious flesh." We desperately need a fresh outpouring of the Holy Spirit to convert the lost and renew the saved *in the church*! Why should our Sikh, Hindu, Muslim and ordinary "pagan" friends be interested in "the saving power" of a Jesus who can't even deliver us from ourselves?

Unbelievers are witnessing the *spectacle* of Christians (whose passion should be the glory of God) slander, sue, maim and murder one another. They hear our boasting and see us building our little "selfdoms" to compete for the loyalty of the lambs Jesus shed his precious blood for—"crucifying the Son of God afresh, and putting him to open shame." (Heb. 6:6) In our first SONSHIP lesson, we read God's announcement that he would replace the Old Covenant because Israel "profaned my name among the nations." He promised a New Covenant with the cleansing of our sins and new hearts filled with his Holy Spirit "so that the nations will know that I am the Lord, when I show myself holy through you, before their eyes." (Ezek. 36:22ff; Jer. 31:31ff) Who loses when Christian's fight? The King of Glory. Grieve with me. Repent with me. — JWL

CONSTRUCTIVE CONFLICT

Learning to Fight Like Christians (so that God Wins)

"Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires. Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other."

- Galatians 5:24-26 -

INTRODUCTION Did you know that peace can be dangerous to your spiritual health? The notion that all conflict is bad and all peace is good is an error we willingly embrace in the hope of protecting ourselves from the pain of conflict. The truth is, people, families and churches may appear to be at peace when a hidden river of poison is running underneath the surface. Often relationships are quietly broken and churches have split without a "shot" ever having been fired! *What was missing was a healthy above-board conflict!*

Our purpose in this lesson is to teach us Christians how to "fight" in the power of the Holy Spirit so that the outcome will be genuine, loving relationships from which the poison has been expelled. Peace-keepers who keep peace, and peacemakers who make peace are very different kinds of people. And, there are two kinds of conflict—destructive and constructive. Whereas destructive conflict is one of Satan's most deadly weapons, constructive conflict is one of God's most powerfully sanctifying tools. So, let's seek to learn what constructive conflict is, and how to go about it.

Our goal is to learn to fight like Christians — so that God wins.

We will purposely avoid focusing on conflicts associated with the types of controversy that tend to set the Matthew 18 process in motion and land the opponents in church or civil courts. True, the principles we offer here will be of help in such cases, but our greater need is to be trained for healthy conflict in the ordinary day to day situations we face. What situations?

Think of the arguments you have had with your spouse over how to spend money or discipline your children, or with your children over their bad grades or messy room, or with your parents over how often you visit, or with relatives over how little money you give them, or with your neighbor over his dog that barks all night, or with the other members of the Church building committee, or Sunday School Curriculum Committee, or, . . . The list is endless because our homes, neighborhoods and churches are the breeding grounds for the inevitable offenses and disagreements that will be a part of the lives of sinful people living in a sinful world.

con·flict (kon'flikt) — noun. Latin *conflictus*, to strike together

1. a fight, clash, contention. 2. sharp disagreement or opposition regarding interests, ideas, etc.; mutual interference of incompatible forces or wills.

OUR THESIS: *We will have conflicts, and each of them will be either destructive or constructive.*

Destructive conflicts, James warns, are fueled by **selfish ambition** and bitter envy, and are set on fire by the misuse of the tongue.

Constructive conflicts, however, are fueled by **wisdom** and the humility that wisdom produces. Such conflicts are possible when we are open to correction and approachable by others, and when we are able to gently approach others without a judgmental tone or attitude.

TWO KEY CONFLICT PASSAGES:

1. **Luke 6:39-42** *He also told them this parable: Can a blind man lead a blind man? Will they not both fall into a pit? A student is not above his teacher, but everyone who is fully trained will be like his teacher. Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? How can you say to your brother, "Brother, let me take the speck out of your eye," when you yourself fail to see the plank in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye.*

Jesus' "then you will see clearly" appears to be a promise to the believer who is willing to endure the pain of self-examination.

QUESTION: What does Jesus imply here about the ability of those who major on dealing with their own sin rather than the sin of others?

YOUR NOTES:

2. **James 3:13-18** *Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show it by his good life, by deeds done in the humility that comes from wisdom. But if you harbor bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast about it or deny the truth. Such "wisdom" does not come down from heaven but is earthly, unspiritual, of the devil. For where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice. But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere. **Peacemakers who sow in peace raise a harvest of righteousness.***

QUESTION: *Is there a difference between a peacekeeper and a peacemaker? What?*

YOUR NOTES:

I. CONFLICT STYLES: FIVE WAYS PEOPLE FIGHT

WITHDRAW — WIN — YIELD — COMPROMISE — RESOLVE (Fairfield 1977, 10-46)

Before we go on, it will be helpful to review the various styles of combat that psychologists have observed in people at odds with one another. It is likely that one of these will be your "preferred style" in conflict situations.

Can you recognize your usual style?

- A. **WITHDRAW** — "Withdraw" people reason: "I can't win, so I will withdraw." Sometimes they may *physically* withdraw by leaving the room, house, school, job or town—or, they may *emotionally* withdraw by avoiding the controversial issues, emotionally charged situations or difficult people involved in the conflict.

Problem: Withdrawal is not a solution, nor is it loving. It is a strategy of self-love and self-protection. It solves none of the issues involved in the conflict, only postpones the inevitable, and robs both you and the other person of the possibility of facing up to and repenting of the sins that led to the conflict.

- B. **WIN** — If the idea of losing in a conflict threatens your self-image, you will likely fight to win—no matter the cost to the relationships or the damage to the church and others around you. There is only one unthinkable outcome to every controversy—losing.

Problem: "Winners" never really win because of the intensity of their self-love. Because they find their righteousness (right-ness) in winning instead of in Jesus, protecting their image as winners blinds them to the fact that they may sometimes be wrong. They may win a few battles, but in the end, they lose the war since they alienate everyone around them. If you look back at the path their lives have taken, you will find a long trail of wounded people.

- C. **YIELD** - "Yielders" are more interested in protecting their relationships than winning, so they neither withdraw from people—or fight to win. *They give up to get along.*

Problem: Yielders operate out of fear, not love. They fear losing friends, status or being rejected. Their agreeable nature is a cover-up for a paralyzing self-love. They accomplish little.

- D. **COMPROMISE** - "Compromisers" know how to manage themselves during a conflict and win in the long-term. They know the art of giving up a little now in order to win more later.

Problem: Compromisers may be closer to the ideal than A - C, but their strategy is not loving. It is just a cover up for a long-term win. They compromise during conflicts they don't really care much about in order to earn the right to exert force on the outcome of future battles that do matter. On the surface of things, they may appear gracious, but they only aim at gaining the long-term advantage. *"I gave in to you on that issue; so now you must allow me this."*

- E. **RESOLVE** - *Resolving was the style of Jesus.* For instance, when the Pharisees brought a woman to him they had caught in the act of adultery, their attitude was "win!" Jesus did not fight back using their "win" methods, nor did he withdraw ("I want nothing to do with you."), or yield ("Do what you wish with her."). Nor did he compromise ("You free her this time, and you can stone the next one you catch."). He confronted the real issue by challenging them to consider the difference between law and mercy. He revealed their hearts for the cold unloving stones they were, showing them that they too had failed to keep God's law from the heart. Who won in this conflict? God did. God was glorified. - John 8:1-11

Problem: None

OPTIONAL: FOR YOUR FUTURE STUDY Do you think there might be some situations in which the *withdraw, yield, win, or compromise* methods might be used to the glory of God—without the fleshly motives normally involved in them? (**Withdraw:** Matt. 12:14; Jn. 6:15; **Yield:** Matt. 16:62; Mk. 14:61; 15:4; **Win:** ?; **Compromise:** Acts 15:19, 27; 21:25 comp. 1 Tim. 4:3; Acts 21:23ff; **Resolve:** 1 Pet. 3:15)

II. THE GOAL OF CONSTRUCTIVE CONFLICT

OUR GOAL FOR ENTERING INTO CONFLICT MUST BE THE GLORY OF GOD — NOT WINNING.

Paul said, *"So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God."*
- 1 Cor. 10:31

Everything? Including conflicts? Yes, we can enter into conflict in a God-glorifying way when we use the intense emotional energy produced by conflict to seek God's glory in the situation. *But how can God get glory out of a conflict?*

THE "SPIRITUAL MATHEMATICS" OF CONSTRUCTIVE CONFLICT

A. HOW MUCH GLORY CAN GOD GET OUT OF YOUR CONFLICT?

The DIFFERENCE Between...

1. What you would do if you acted according to the *F L* ___ ___ *H*.
And...
2. What you actually did as you were led by the *S P* ___ ___ ___ *T*.
Is the "AMOUNT OF GLORY" God will get in the situation.

SEE PHOTO/ APPENDIX C, p. SAC-1. Think of God's glory! (*Daily Nation*, May 25, 1998)

B. HOW MUCH RESPONSIBILITY DO YOU HAVE FOR — AND IN — THE CONFLICT?

1. We generally assume that in any conflict, we are at least 90% right. We may grant that the other person is 10% right—at most. *That means the other person is 90% wrong and we are only 10% responsible.*
2. If we accept *that* (admittedly preposterous) percentage as the truth, it is also true that:

YOUR 10% OF THE BLAME IS 100% OF YOUR PART OF THE PROBLEM!

You cannot change the other person, but you can deal with the 100% of your 10% of it!

BE HONEST. If the glory of God is to come from your conflict, it will begin with your acceptance of responsibility for your part in the conflict. Otherwise, you will be neutralized and will not be able to serve as God's agent in the conflict who seeks the power of the Holy Spirit to turn the matter into a constructive exercise—the goal of which will be love and growth in grace *to the glory of God*.

III. GETTING YOUR HEART READY FOR CONSTRUCTIVE CONFLICT (WHO IS QUALIFIED?)

James 3:13-18 (p. S13-2) tells us who is qualified enter into constructive conflict:

- A. a **WISE** person — Biblical wisdom has two components, *knowing and doing* — knowing the right thing to do (from God's view of the situation), and then *doing* it.
- B. a **HUMBLE** person — "*the humility that comes from wisdom.*" Humility is born as we daily merge two images into one: the sinfulness of our "Jeremiah 7:9 Hearts," and Jesus, our Great High Priest, seated at the Father's right hand interceding for us.
- C. a **PATIENT** person — Humility produces patience with other sinners. When our patience begins to wear thin, it is time to preach the Gospel to ourselves. How do you think God maintains his patience with us? *He looks at Jesus*. How can we maintain our patience with others? *By looking at Jesus*. Our faith unleashes the Spirit's fruit of patience.

- D. an **APPROACHABLE** person — Knowing our own sins and weaknesses, we are not afraid when other people point them out to us. We can say, “*You don’t know the half of it; I’m even worse than you think!*” So, we need not carry a spear and shield to defend ourselves. As we look at the cross of Jesus and his continual intercession for us, we see that these are the ultimate criticism of who we are. We were such big sinners that God’s own Son had to die for us, and we are still so imperfect that his Son must keep on interceding for us before the Father—twenty-four hours a day.

IV. CONSTRUCTIVE CONFLICT – HOW TO DO IT

- A. **Begin a love offensive with the person or people you disagree with.**
Does this sound radical?

Jesus was always saying the most radical things! For example: “*You have heard that it was said, ‘Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven. (“A Chip Off The Old Block”) He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? And, if you greet only your brothers, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that? Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.”* – Matt. 5:43-48 (Note Paul’s parallel: “*Be imitators of God...walk in love.*” – Eph. 5:1f)

The book, **Come Back, Barbara!** is co-authored by a pastor and his once wayward daughter. It records their eight year-long battle—a model of constructive conflict. The self-righteous father had to be broken before he could begin a love-offensive with his immoral, drug-using daughter. He began their final battle with these words: “*Barbara, I don’t want to take you with me to heaven only as a precious memory.*” In the end, repentance and healing come to both through the Gospel. (**Come Back, Barbara!** by C. John Miller & Barbara Miller Juliani, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, 1988)

- B. **Understand the importance of “I”, “R” and “F” — INFORMATION, REPENTANCE and FORGIVENESS.**

Before we can “flight” in a such a way that God wins, we must seek God’s truth—God’s view of the situation, *and*, the truth about our own hearts.

1. **Is there INFORMATION we need to gather?** Do we understand what the real issues are? Are there things lurking under the surface—a previous history of hurt, old sins that are coloring the relationship? Are there racial tribal or personality issues that underlie the more obvious concerns? What is *really* being fought over?

Dr. Timothy Irwin is the psychiatric consultant for a large Protestant missionary organization with about 650 overseas staff. During his career, he has observed thousands of people in conflict. He reports that in 99% of the cases, the surface issue (the “presentation problem”) isn’t the *real* problem at all. Most of the time, the real problem is *the way* one or more of the parties are holding their position.

That underscores the need for gathering information. How can you best do that? **IN FACE-TO-FACE DIALOGUE** with the other party! Get to the **ROOT** issue—the core of the problem. **NOTE:** This can be a dangerous quest, since we can easily fall into the trap of disagreeing with others because we dislike their personalities or because we have projecting our suspicions about their attitudes and motives onto them. If we want to know “why” they have done something or think something, we should ask them. If we want to know how they feel about something, we should ask them.

2. Is there a step of REPENTANCE we need to take? Are we entering into the conflict with a self-righteous attitude? Are we clothed in our "being right," or in Jesus' righteousness? (Review S-10 - "Repentance as a Way of Life")

3. Is there FORGIVENESS we need to extend? Is there bitterness or resentment in our hearts that is preventing us from loving and perhaps agreeing with the other person/s involved? (Review S-12 - "Forgiveness as a Way of Life")

TRY TO IMAGINE how fighting this battle would look if fought according to the flesh (Gal. 5:19-21), and then according to the Spirit (5:22). When we have done our best to gather INFORMATION, and taken any needed steps of REPENTANCE and FORGIVENESS, the Holy Spirit will have good material to work with as he moves to enable us to enter into conflict in a God-glorifying manner.

**C. Reject gossip¹ and slander² (your own — and that of others).
Go directly to the other person.**

Work on your APPR ____ BILITY Be consciously clothed in Jesus, not your goodness. Then people will not be afraid of coming to you with criticisms—nor will you fear them.

Learn to communicate O P ____ LY with others. Tell the truth. With gentleness. (Gal. 5:23) Remember, you are a big sinner too! So Paul counsels us:

"Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted." — Gal. 6:1

Unfortunately, the diagram below illustrates the way our flesh prefers to operate—a voiding the person who is the real object of our problem, and going to others to collect an army of followers who will authenticate our dislike of them.

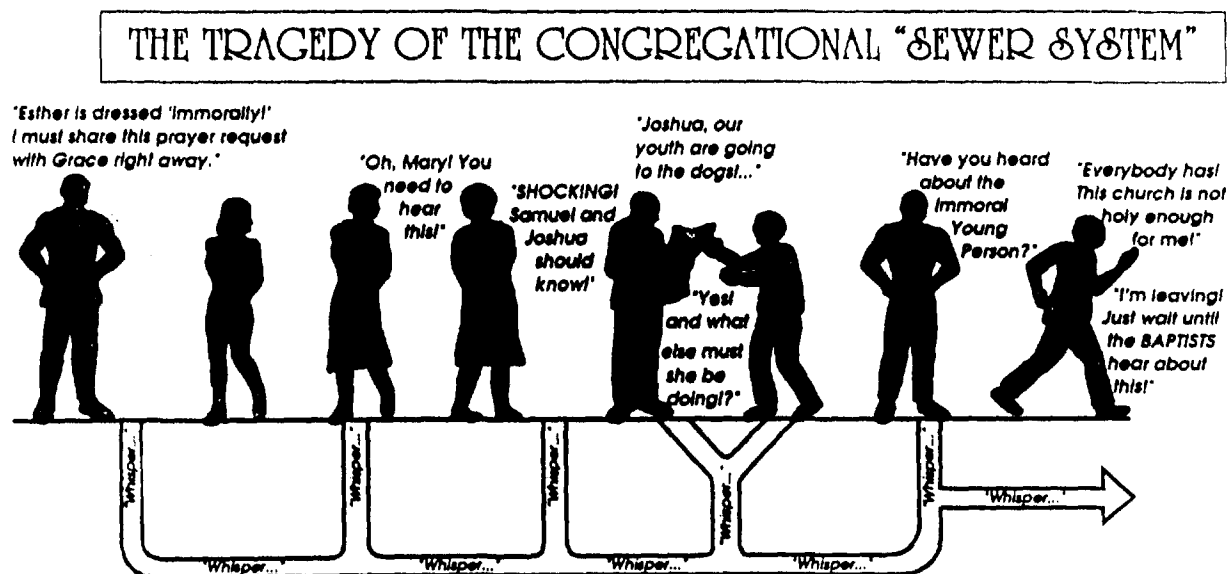


Fig. 13-2

¹ Gossip is reporting on someone else's sins. ² Slander is making unsubstantiated judgments or telling lies concerning someone's attitudes, motives or actions.

- C. Ask questions rather than making accusations.** What sort of behavior is required for peace to come? Perhaps you will begin to see that you may have been in the wrong—or at least that much more of the blame lies with you.

NOTE: The courage to ask the two suggested questions below comes from only one place: Gospel faith. When we "put on Christ," we can then be open to the possibility that we might be wrong! Without Christ, we will blindly cling to our "rightness," be defensive and self-protective, and be afraid of appearing to be wrong. The Gospel gives us the desire to know the truth, and enables us to face up to any fault we have in the matter.

FOCUS ON CHRIST. Then, ask these questions of those you are in conflict with.

1. *"What do you want me to do?"*

2. *"What do you want me to stop doing?"*

You may or may not be able to comply with what they tell you, but you will definitely come away understanding the other person's point of view. And, as you think over what they have said, you may realize that you share some of the blame for the conflict. This will provide you with a good opportunity for repentance, something that will glorify God, honor the Gospel, and open the door for their repentance.

V. LOOKING BACK: WHEN THINGS HAVE GONE WRONG — THE PRIMARY CAUSES OF DESTRUCTIVE CONFLICT

- A. IMPATIENCE WITH OTHERS (TOUCHINESS)** Pray against it. Impatience is rooted in self-righteousness, and never "stands still." It moves into bitterness, malice, and sins of the tongue. Touchiness is "self, set on hair-trigger." How would you like to live with someone whose attitude is: *"Jogoo kasema usiku umekucha anika nyagae kakusudia."* ("The rooster said the day is breaking so whoever steps on me does it on purpose.")
— Swahili proverb, Kenya

What is behind touchiness? It is the "P-U-L-S-E" of a self-righteous heart...

Pride (our desire to always look good, always be right and never be mistaken)

Unbelief in the Gospel as my righteousness

Lust for self-vindication

Self-righteousness

Ego protection

- B. MISUSE OF THE TONGUE: Double-Check *The Tongue Assignment*.** (p. S1-28)
There will always be a temptation to begin a campaign of gossip and/or slander those we are in conflict with. **WHY?** So that we can enlist an "army" to support our position!

C. FAILURE OF OUR JOY and failure to ask for God's wisdom in times of testing

Each of us has a point at which things really matter to us—a point where we feel we are being pushed to violate our "standards." (These may be pure Biblical norms, or they may only be our own scruples.)

Then, if we are pushed beyond that, **BOOM! We explode.** (Jack Miller used to lament this tendency in himself by saying, "Be careful of Jack when he's right!")

D. UNEXAMINED CHARACTER FLAWS (in ourselves)

— James mentions **selfish ambition and bitter envy.** If we ever need to enter into deep self-examination, it is when we are in conflict. Conflict has a way of hiding our faults and accentuating the flaws of others. We can be easily blinded.

Our tendency is to move from praying, "Search me Oh God..." to, "Search him/her, Oh God!"

VI. CONCLUSION: BEFORE YOU RUN AWAY FROM — OR JUMP INTO — CONFLICT

Jesus seemed to go out of His way to get into conflict with people. And, because of the blinding nature of sin, we probably need to be *more* engaged in reproof and rebuking one another (in gentle love) in the body of Christ—not less.

Yes, in our reproof, we must always go to the other person as a fellow sinner, repenting all the way, but go to them we must. All the great revivals were marked by open confession of sin and such a commitment to one another that men and women were enabled to move into one another's lives to encourage repentance.

1. Learn to relate to others with a gentle honesty.

Without conflict, there will be no possibility of the other person seeing their wrong—or you seeing yours—and thus no repentance or healing. God loses the glory we could be bringing him when our fear of conflict makes us silent.

2. Pray for the Holy Spirit's wisdom, and know that still, you will probably make mistakes.

If you do your best and still make a mess of things, be eager to repent and ask for forgiveness.

3. "Soak yourself" in the gospels to see how Jesus related to people.

Sometimes he seemed rude. He went to people's houses and said things like, "You have invited the wrong people to this party." (Luke 14:12ff)

Dr. Dan Allender, Christian psychologist and author said, "If Jesus had loved by being nice as we know niceness, he would have lived to a ripe old age." Just loving people in honest ways can get you killed.

Jesus would often speak the truth to someone and then be silent. e.g. *"Peter, You're going to betray me three times."* He didn't argue with unbelief. Don't demand change from people. They will not hear the good in what you say. Rather they will feel like what you are saying is, *"If you don't change, I won't be your friend anymore."*

Speak the truth, then let go of the situation. Give the Holy Spirit a chance to work—without you.

- 4. Remember the marks of dishonest relationships: silent judgmentalism or hypocritical flattery.**

Neither is loving. If you find you are relating to someone in either of these ways, it is likely that you need to enter into constructive conflict with them.

- 5. Remember that for conflict to be constructive rather than destructive, the glory of God—not winning your way or punishing difficult people must be your goal.**

When God's glory and honor and the good of others is what motivates you, God will delight to guide you.

After all, HE will be the real winner!



GRACE ASSIGNMENTS

- 1. Read THE LETTERS following this lesson. Answer the questions, and take good notes to help fuel our discussions.**

These letters come out of REAL-LIFE SITUATIONS in which Christian workers have had to either face themselves, work through conflicts on a team, or both. As you read them, try to put yourself into the situation with them as a fellow team member—or, "get into their skin" and try it on. Sometimes we need to visualize how the principles of Constructive Conflict work in the lives of OTHERS before we can see how to apply them in our own.

AN INVITATION: In the future, we hope to replace these letters with YOURS! As you, the African counterparts of these missionaries supply your experiences, we will use them—and honor any restrictions you care to apply. In that way, your conflict won't become "world famous" without your permission!

- 2. Then, work through the "CONFLICT PROJECT," a workshop on interpersonal struggle**

Here you will be challenged to struggle with your own soul and put the Gospel principles you have been learning to the test.

A missionary candidate failed her final interview before the Board of World Harvest Mission. The Director, Jack Miller, asked his wife to write a letter of refusal and a challenge to change.



World Harvest Mission - 222 Pennsylvania Avenue - Oreland, PA 19075

December 16, 1987

Dear _____,

I have heard encouraging reports of the growth you have experienced in Sonship Training. You have grown in your understanding of the Gospel and felt a real release from sin patterns in your life. I appreciate your forthrightness and honesty. You have no hidden agendas and your love and support of others is very evident.

As I sit in on the examination of candidates for missions, I often wonder if I would have passed in 1979 when we were on our way to Uganda. I had such deep fears and felt so inadequate within myself. Your strengths were obvious to us as we met together. Your concern for the lost, love of hospitality, your team spirit, no hidden agendas, and forthrightness in dealing with people and problems were all a plus. However, what came through in our meeting was your quickness to judge, to speak and to sometimes erupt in anger when matters didn't go as you thought they should go.

This is why we spent so much time on this subject with you. Since all of us have been on the mission field and worked in teams (and with teams) we know how serious this is and if not addressed can be a great hindrance to team work. I am not sure how seriously you take this. Is it possible that you have a sin pattern which God needs to search out for you?

My reason for raising this hard question is that if you view it simply as part of your background or even treasure it as part of your life and personality, can there be a change? Since I have had similar struggles I needed to be faced with God's imperative of a gentle and quiet spirit. I needed God's view of what He wanted of me. As I studied I Peter 3:1-6, I was faced with an utter impossibility, especially in verse 4, *"Instead, it should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God's sight."*

For instance, last November when we had an outreach evening for the Irish on the subject of forgiveness, many Irish women came. They were hurt, broken, guilty, angry and some of them had really been wronged and did not know what to do with all of these hurts. To these women you cannot bring a lot of "how to's", but you can bring Christ who is gentle and lowly of heart. They need to know how Christ can help them to have the rare jewel of a gentle and quiet spirit. So, how to change?

A deepening honesty and a desire to die to what I am so I may put on Christ who is "gentle and lowly in heart." God does not despise a broken and a contrite heart. This is my biggest struggle. I get a little knowledge, or I have a small success and then I think I might have God's perspective. *"Rose Marie, my delight is that you have a gentle and quiet spirit. If you have this then you will please me, if you don't then you will be full of busy work to fill all the empty places."*

What does God want? He wants you to say, *"Yes, I have a problem, but I am deeply concerned about seeing it changed and I am working on it."*



I write this because I love you and I do know that Christ is sufficient to meet every need. 36
 And, during this time of waiting for approval, I am confident He will be your teacher. I 37
 realize that these changes do not come overnight. We are not expecting complete over- 38
 night change, but we would like to see you work with most serious intent to overcome this 39
 and any other obstacles in your life to the full expression of your gifts and graces in Christ. 40
 You are in Christ, He has infinite resources, look to Him for help. Good things will follow. 41

God bless, Rose Marie

A DISCUSSION GUIDE on ROSE MARIE'S LETTER

1. **Suppose you had responded to Jesus' challenge to serve as a missionary to Muslims in Mombasa.** You have told your church and your friends. You have quit your job and completed your pre-missionary training. BUT —you fail the final interview before the Board and are told that you cannot go overseas *until* you first make some changes. **How would you *feel*?**

2. What would you ***tell***

a. your church _____

b. your friends _____

c. your employer _____?

3. Do you think any of these would be ***surprised*** by what has happened? Why, or why not?

4. Do you think this woman had a serious problem, did the Mission "***blow it out of proportion***?"

Why or why not? _____

5. Can you predict what impact this person would have had (unchanged) on a team?

On the Muslims in Mombasa? _____

On you as an African? _____

6. Note the ***line numbers*** where Rose Marie: Affirms her _____

Clearly states the problem by mentioning her specific sins _____ Personally repents
as one sinner to another _____ Shows her *how* she should be different _____

7. The **symptoms** (fruit) of this person's problem are obvious. (*She is opinionated, quick tempered, defensive, overly sensitive to criticism, and undervalues the opinions of others.*)

But, what is the **ROOT** of her problem? _____

8. What must happen in this person's **MIND & HEART** before she is to be able to get along with others?

9. In Colossians 3:5-16, Paul uses the "put off the old," "put on the new" analogy. What this believer must "put off" is obvious. But, holiness is more than just not doing bad things—it is replacing the bad with good. What will the Holy Spirit enable her to "put on" in her relationships with others?

10. **DISCUSS:** How will the Mission Board *know* if she is growing? (How might she be different?)

a.

b.

c.

11. Consider these Scriptures that mention *her particular problem* and offer real help on *how to change*: James 1:19; Eph. 4:31-5:2; Rom. 12:3ff; 8:13b; Gal. 5:22; I Cor. 4:7

Can you think of others?

12. If **YOU** were asked to sit on a missionary board to examine candidates for your country, what would you look for?

a.

b.

c.



BECOMING "NOTHING"

A "Prayer Letter" from a Missionary serving in Novosibirsk, Siberia

YOUR attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness...
— Philippians 2:5-7

God has been impressing on me the necessity of being nothing, because I am so often fighting for something. There is very little that I do not have an opinion about, and usually it is a strong one. Here are a few words that people, or God has used to describe me: "harsh, quarrelsome, strong-headed, independent, aggressive, someone who wants to win, competitive, angry, sharp and abrasive." Now these words did not all come from one person, but from different people who know me in different contexts and to different degrees. I would have to be dead stupid to not realize God is seeking to say something to me. In these past few weeks, God has brought into focus these detrimental and sinful aspects of my character, through relationships on my team. I found myself so often in debates during our team time and began hating these times. As these conflicts heated up and my anger grew I began asking some questions of myself, as well as being asked some questions by others.

I wondered, "Why are these ideas so important to me, and why am I fighting so hard to defend myself and prove my point of view?" Of course the smoke screen was that they were Biblical issues and I thought the Bible taught something else. I asked God to show me what the problem was. First He brought people into my life who lovingly and honestly confronted me, who showed me much grace.



St. Basil's Basilica - Moscow - 1561

Fig. 13-4

He then began to ask me some questions like, "What are you afraid of? What is there for you to lose? What are your limits? What 'rights' are in jeopardy? Who are you?"

I began to see that I really didn't trust that God could bring about what is best for me, and that I needed to protect myself. It really came down to the fact that I wasn't sure God loved me and would give me what I needed. Now this brings me to the second part of it. I realized I had put conditions on my service to God, and as these

things were being threatened I fought back. It's as though I felt I had bargaining power with God. I'll go and do this, if you do this. In fact my conditions seemed quite reasonable. I realized that I felt somehow that I deserved certain things because I had "given up" certain things. God has been reminding me that I was bought at a price, a very high price, the blood of Jesus, and that I am no longer my own. I belong to God without condition, he gets to make the decisions about what I need or don't need. Actually I have many rights and many privileges, beginning with the right to be called a child of God. This is what gives me the confidence to trust even when things look like they may get a bit uncomfortable. I have so much more than I will ever need. My Father is so rich and loves me so much. All that He has is mine. All I need to do is ask and believe. I listened to a tape the other day and the speaker said there are so many unhappy missionaries because they have limits and conditions on what they'll do. Usually these things can seem quite reasonable. Here are some of the things I realize I have been "fighting for." These might help you pray for me and maybe even look at your own life.

- 1) I want an apartment that I can call my own and "home".
- 2) I don't want to have to travel a lot.



3) I want some friends, that I would pick that understand me.

4) I want to minister according to my gifts and abilities.

5) I want to be settled and,

6) I want to be recognized, appreciated and understood.

Now I'm not asking that you pray that I get all of these, but that I become nothing, yielding all sense of "rights", trusting in God's love and sufficiency for whatever situation he calls me to or allows me to be in! There is much freedom, and joy in this. I want to live like this, with great expectation and confidence in the Spirit who lives in me to be all I need and my great joy.

So you see missionaries are real people, with real sins and real struggles against the desires of the flesh, the temptations of Satan and the world. Teams are a primary place of attack. Please continually pray for team unity and for love among us!

Now, from a separate letter, here is another team member's viewpoint of the same 1997 team conflict...

ABOUT A MONTH AND A HALF AGO, when our team got together to discuss our budget, some problems began to surface. Several people began to question the direction the team was taking. Some felt that they had little or no place in the work of the team.

AS WITH ALL CONFLICTS, the problems were only partly

about the policies of the team. Just beneath the surface were the problems of unforgiveness and resentment. However, over the last two weeks, the Spirit of God has begun resolving these conflicts, bringing us together as individuals and as a group to discuss our problems.

WE GOT TOGETHER and discussed the team's strategies, confronted one another with sin, and asked one another for forgiveness. I think the hardest part was actually getting the problems out and dealing with them. It seemed so easy to just push things under the carpet.

BUT GOD has blessed us with the courage to really work through things, and the grace to forgive one another. I believe we are now better able to love one another and work together.

PRaise GOD for the work of His Spirit!

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What do you think the writer of the second letter means by *"As with all conflicts, the problems were only partly about the policies of the team. Just beneath the surface..."* (See page 13-5, item IV, B)

2. What were the **"SURFACE ISSUES?"** (Counselors often call these "presentation problems.") There are three of them in the first paragraph.

3. What were the **REAL ISSUES**—the root issues that had

grown up and appeared as above the surface as "fruit"—conflict over budgetary problems? Go even deeper than the words, "unforgiveness and resentment"—what is their deeper root? (S-1, p. 1-3ff)

4. How did **"believing the Gospel"**—being consciously clothed in the righteousness of Christ—give this team the courage to enter into and resolve this conflict? (Think of "Becoming Nothing.")

a. the team as a whole?

b. for single woman who wrote the **"Becoming Nothing"** letter in particular?

5. When the Holy Spirit began to lead this team into a resolution of their problems, what did he have to do in the hearts of the team members to get them ready? (What was the most difficult hurdle they had to jump before healing could begin?)

6. What do you think might have happened to this team had they not followed the leading of the Spirit and had the courage to enter into "constructive conflict?"

AS A POINT OF INTEREST

Just after the Novosibirsk team began its internal struggle, it began doing the SONSHIP cause as a team. What "spiritual tools" has SONSHIP given *you* thus far that might help survive in a situation like this, and more importantly, see great glory go to God from it?



THE CONFLICT PROJECT

A Workshop in Solving Interpersonal Conflicts

THE CHALLENGE: *Use the principles you have studied in S-13 to work on a Gospel approach to a conflict you have recently had—or are presently in.*

You may want to do this assignment as a complement to the "LOVE PROJECT" (S-11) by focusing on a **personal conflict** with one of the three people listed there. If you do, deal with a *specific instance of conflict*. Or, you may want to deal with an **institutional conflict** and tackle a tough issue such as a dispute in a family, extended family, a church congregation, the staff of an organization, an academic institution, etc. *In any case, be as detailed and specific as you can in your analysis of the situation.*

1. Describe a conflict that you have had in the past or is going on at present.

This may be a conflict you have "internalized" to the point that the other person (or group of people) is totally unaware of your problem with him/her/them.)

2. Can you identify the conflict style of each of the persons ("players") involved?

Use their *initials* only, and review the five conflict styles on pages 1, 2 of S-13. When you think you know their style, **circle it**, and state the reasons for your choice.

Your Initials _____ Conflict Style: Withdraw - Win - Yield - Compromise - Resolve
Why?

1st Player _____ Conflict Style: Withdraw - Win - Yield - Compromise - Resolve
Why?

2nd Player _____ Conflict Style: Withdraw - Win - Yield - Compromise - Resolve
Why?

3rd Player _____ Conflict Style: Withdraw - Win - Yield - Compromise - Resolve
Why?

4th Player _____ Conflict Style: Withdraw - Win - Yield - Compromise - Resolve
Why?

3. What makes each of these people (or this group) easy—or difficult—for you to love?

1st Player - easy or difficult to love? Why?

2nd Player - easy or difficult to love? Why?

3rd Player - easy or difficult to love? Why?

4th Player - easy or difficult to love? Why?

4. If our SONSHIP group interviewed the other parties in this conflict (the person or group), and asked them the same question about you, what might they say?

If you don't know for sure, pray for the courage to ask them as a part of this project! (Jesus will need to be really big in your heart to do this!) Your question might take the form of, **"Where have I hurt, displeased or disappointed you, and how might I be able to better serve you in love?"** **"What is it about me that makes me hard to love?"**

5. In what way do you share the same ROOT SINS (not outward behavior) that the other people in this conflict have? (Look underneath the surface at both of your hearts.)

1st Player - I share the following root sin/s with him/her:

2nd Player - I share the following root sin/s with him/her:

3rd Player - I share the following root sin/s with him/her:

4th Player - I share the following root sin/s with him/her:

6. Based on the CONSTRUCTIVE CONFLICT Lesson, what changes do you need to make? That is, how will you handle this conflict differently in the future?

Please, be specific about the changes you plan to make. "Aim at nothing, hit nothing!"

a. changes in my perceptions of the situation

b. changes in my secret attitudes toward these people

c. changes in the way I relate (talk to, look at, act towards) these people

7. Can you predict what effect your being changed might have on the people and thus on the situation? Be specific, please!

8. Have you been proud, rude or selfish so that the conflict has become worse?
If so, what did you say or do?

9. Is it possible that talking too much or too little about the conflict has made it worse? Think of the times when you were quiet — or refused to be quiet.

10. What are some specific ways that you can “go along side” this person as their friend, helper and intercessor—instead of being their king, judge or lawgiver?

11. How can “believing the Gospel” give you a different view of the conflict with this person or group?

12. Explain what a simple, childlike usage of Galatians 6:1 and 1 Peter 4:8 would look like in your situation.

“Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted.” — Gal. 6:1

“Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins.” — 1 Pet. 4:8

13. Are there areas in your life where you should be in conflict right now, but are not?
Please describe them briefly and sketch out a course of action.

a.

b.



The Law Vs. The Gospel In Home & Family Relationships

Marriage & Parenting by Grace

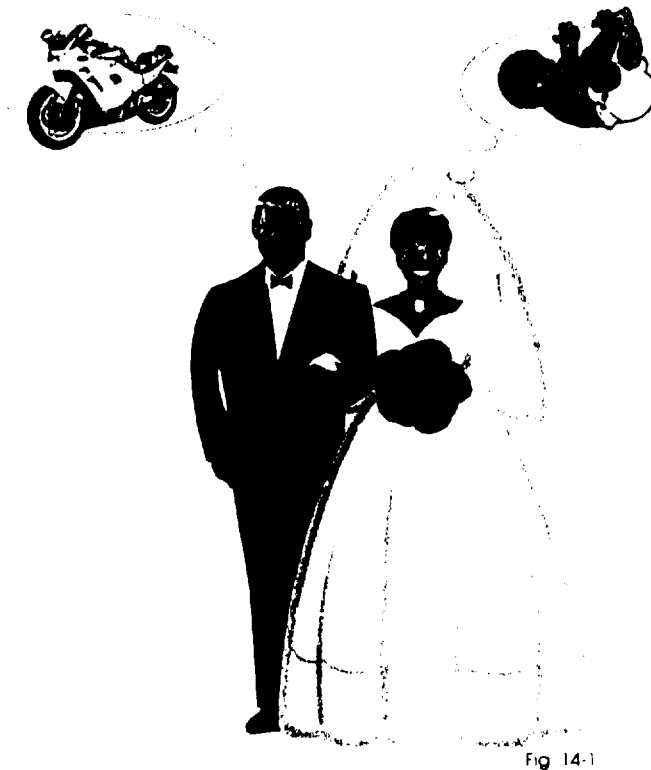


Fig 14-1

Wedding Day Dreams

LAW Vs. THE GOSPEL

In Our Home & Family Relationships



Traditional House
Ghana

Fig. 14-2

INTRODUCTION

These days, we use the term "Christian home" a lot.

What *is* a "Christian home"—a house of wood or wattle in which a few Christians happen to live, or something more? All believers have the same Holy Spirit living in us and when he came to make his home in our hearts, he brought along a set of "Jesus-like" relational principles with him. Ideally, then, when there are a number of believers living under one roof, the atmosphere should be more like that in heaven there than any other place on earth! We chuckle to hear that, because the truth is that all too often, "Christian homes" are just a collection of people who live in constant tension with one another. (Of course none of *our* homes are like this!) In such homes, Jesus is like a referee they keep locked away in the closet to bring out to monitor fights rather than the reigning King of the domain. We have some good news—literally. *The Gospel offers a wonderful solution for such problem homes!*

I. CHANGING THINGS IN OUR HOMES: THINK STRAIGHT—THINK THE GOSPEL!

- A. It may sound odd at first, but the chief cause of poor relationships in our homes is that we Christians *forget the Gospel*. For that reason, this lesson is designed to:
1. **diagnose some of the ways** (overt and subtle) that our unbelief quenches the Holy Spirit to neutralize the transforming power of the Gospel in our families, and,
 2. **to teach us how to correct the problems.** Thankfully, though our sin is very complicated, grace is simple!

We wear ourselves out trying to battle the visible *fruits* of our unbelief in ourselves, our spouses and our children. We *are* able to make temporary changes in our outward behavior, but if left untreated, the root simply sprouts again, and we're back where we started. The good news is that we have a friend in the Holy Spirit. He is ready to expose the core of our sin problem and lead us to repentance. In our home, we have found when each of us is willing to say, "*I am the problem*," (either by initiating the problem or sinfully reacting to it), we are humbled before one another, hard hearts melt, forgiveness is asked for and granted, love grows, and our home becomes more like heaven than... that *other place*! Does that mean that we can have perfect homes? No, but "*walking the Gospel*" makes a tremendous difference! But how do we "*walk*" the Gospel? Do you remember the two simple steps of the "Gospel walk?"

1. **LEFT FOOT: I am a big sinner.** "I admit it! I am guilty. Look! I can see the log in my own eye!"
2. **RIGHT FOOT: Jesus is a bigger Savior!** "Jesus, here I am again! I yield to your righteousness! Clothe me! Be my beauty and my righteousness!"

Now, that is not very complicated, but it is easily forgotten. And, when we forget it, we begin to think of ourselves as "non-sinners," while other family members remain "big sinners." In that state of mine, Jesus, our Great High Priest, our Advocate with the Father, our *only* beauty, and righteousness disappears in the fog of our unbelief. (Rom. 7:18,19) When Jesus slips out of the picture, we become confused about how we are to get and maintain righteousness and we lose the ability to relate to other sinners. Then...

Then, "law" supplants the gospel in our home and we are left with only one way to change ourselves or others—by making and enforcing rules! We live in Exodus, not Acts, and instead of relying on the Holy Spirit, we rely on guilt, duty and raw willpower to make change happen (in violation of Rom. 7:6; 8:13). Worse, our self-reliance actually quenches and grieves the Holy Spirit, so that things get worse, not better! In this "brave new world" where law is king, I come to believe that my rules, my teaching, my enforcement of my perception of God's laws will reform the terribly imperfect people I am forced to live with. I want them to shape up so that they'll be acceptable to me and to God (in that order).

B. CHANGING THE IMPERFECT PEOPLE IN OUR LIVES It is easy to see what is wrong with our family members and friends. And guess what? When you see their sin, you are merely agreeing with God who sees it too! In fact, you are his ally in changing them! His attitude is...

*"I love you just the way you are, but . . .
I love you too much to leave you the way you are."*

(So far, so good.)

1. THE PROBLEM But wait! Our tactics and God's differ. The temptation is for us to take over God's job of changing our family and friends. It is easy to confuse our role as agents of sanctification with becoming the "means" of it! But, if we want to effectively partner with God to help others grow, we must ask ourselves three questions:

a. Into WHAT do I hope to change them? In other words, if I do succeed in changing everybody in my family, what will they "look like?" What will my "finished product" be?

b. HOW do I think these changes will take place? That is, what will be the mechanism I will use to change all of these imperfect people? (And how does that compare to God's methodology—the Gospel?)

c. What role does MY being changed have in motivating others to change? Am I the sort of finished product on display that my family can look at and say, *"That is what I want to become?"* Could it be that God wants to change me first, and then use my example to change them?

It is our misunderstanding of the biblical answers to these questions that gives rise to so much pain and conflict in our most intimate relationships—especially in our families.

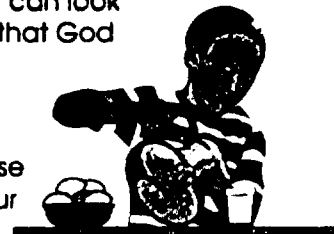


Fig. 14-3

2. THE SOLUTION: "Believing the gospel in our homes will change our homes."

Just how "believing the gospel" transforms our homes is the subject of the next part of the lesson. As you let the Holy Spirit overhaul your life—including your style of relating to others, you will become a very effective change-agent in the lives of others! Are you interested? The price is high—letting the Holy Spirit probe your heart.

The first thing you need to understand to effectively disciple others (including the members of your family) is the difference between the Law and the Gospel and the different types of obedience they promote—whether legalistic or heart obedience.

Mere outward obedience, *per se*, is not the "gold" that God is after in our lives. Just like earthly fathers and mothers, God wants the love of our hearts, not the begrudging compliance of duty. *Loving obedience* is what we desire from our children as well.

C. OUR THESIS: The New Testament is crystal clear on the role of "law" in the life of the believer: God did *not* design the law to change man's heart. Rather, it is a "tutor" (Gal. 3:24) to drive him in *powerless desperation* to Jesus who can change him as he "walks in the Spirit" by believing the Gospel. Our flesh rejects the idea that only the Gospel can change people, so, we fall back into trying to change behavior by making and enforcing rules, and meting out punishments—as if this could really change the heart.

Of course Law can change outward behavior. How? By promising rewards (positive reinforcement), or negatively, by creating a climate of fear and guilt, by threatening punishment, loss, exclusion, etc. In this way it can exert such a strong influence on a person that he will (sometimes) do what the law demands, and refrain what it prohibits. However, as we have said before, our concern should be not just the outward conduct, but from what fountain that conduct is flowing, that is, the motive.

Was the motive for the obedience (or the good behavior)...

1. ***a desire to merit personal glory or acceptance?*** (as the Sermon on the Mount condemns — Matthew 6:1ff; 22:5ff, etc. "everything they do is done for men to see," etc.)
2. ***or, a desire to escape punishment?*** This is just a form of self-love, an ill-motivated, false obedience" warned against in the New Testament, and called "worldly sorrow" that leads to death. 2 Cor. 7:10,11)
3. ***or, was it love for God, others, and the glory of God*** — the heart and soul of the Law." — 1 Cor. 10:31 says that we are to "do all for the glory of God.")

Dr. Wayne Mack of the Christian Counseling & Educational Fellowship (CCEF) in the USA gives this humorous (but weighty) example:

Little Johnny had disobeyed, and his mother wanted him to sit down in a chair for a parental lecture. "Young man, you *sit down!*" she commanded. He kept standing. "*SIT DOWN!*" she insisted. Still he stood. "*Johnny if you don't sit down this instant, I am going to whip you with a stick!*" she threatened. Johnny sat down, and, glaring at his mother said, "*I may be sitting down on the outside, but I'm standing up on the inside!*"

The Oromo in Ethiopia and Eritrea have a proverb:

"Namummaan kessa — mataan rifeensa." The real person is inside — the head (what you see) is only hair.

Did Johnny obey? Was sitting down all his mother *really* wanted? Do you see it? *External obedience is necessary, but it doesn't go far enough. God wants our loving obedience, not just external conformity to his rules.* Here you might want to look back at S-04, "The Three Levels of the Law" on page 4-5.

OUR AIM AS SPOUSES AND PARENTS should be to create an atmosphere in which everyone is conscious of the fact that they stand before God and one another only on the basis of grace, since everyone is imperfect and constantly dependent on the forgiving love of God.

II. LAW VS. GOSPEL RELATIONSHIPS COMPARED AND CONTRASTED

Two sets of comparisons follow. THE FIRST is *general*, and is useful in any situation. It compares a "law-oriented" style of relating to a "grace oriented" style of relating. THE SECOND specifically targets *home and family relationships*, comparing the atmosphere in "law-oriented" and "grace-oriented" homes.

LAW & GOSPEL ORIENTED STYLES OF RELATING

COMPARED & CONTRASTED

A LAW ORIENTED STYLE OF RELATING

How Legalism (or "moralism") Shows Itself in Personal Relationships — at School, the Office, in the Neighborhood, Home—Anywhere

1. ***I believe that nagging*** will change the other person. (so I do a lot of it)
2. ***I demand*** that my friend/spouse/child/parent/roommate/unbelieving neighbor/ live up to my standards. I get critical and judgmental when they don't perform according to my expectations.
3. ***I correct others*** as if I was not a sinner and did not share the same root sins.
4. ***I lack confidence*** in the promises of God. I often feel worried and fearful.
5. ***I believe that*** I am justified by faith, but sanctified (keep my acceptance with God and others current) by my works. I try hard to make my Christian life work. I get depressed, frustrated or angry at others when it doesn't.
6. ***I don't understand*** the radical nature of grace — so I have no grace to give to others.
7. ***My life is characterized by*** excuse-making, blame shifting, defensiveness, and complaining. When things go wrong, I am rarely, if ever, to blame.
8. ***I expect*** my spouse/child/roommate/friend/parent to do for me what only Jesus can do.
9. ***I tend to concentrate*** on problems rather than on Jesus.

A GRACE-ORIENTED STYLE OF RELATING

How the Gospel of Grace Shows Itself in Personal Relationships —

I am being "gentled" by the Gospel of Jesus. The Good News that God is gentle with me leads me to be gentle with other sinners.

1. **Grace enables me:** I am forgiven and God keeps on forgiving me — and I am learning a lifestyle of forgiveness.
2. **Grace teaches me** that I am not condemned by God, therefore I do not condemn others.
3. **I believe that God will change *me*** by taking the beam out of my eye, and that *he* will change other people (*unbelieving friends, fellow Christians or my mate*) as I pray and let them see God changing me.
4. **When I must correct others,** I go to them repenting myself, sharing in their weakness as a sinner who needs Jesus' cleansing blood and renewing grace as much as they do.
5. **I am now able to listen** when I am corrected. (*Since I am "clothed in Christ," I don't have to be perfect.*)
6. **Grace enables me** to accept him (or her) as they are.
7. **I am able to** honor, praise, and appreciate others.
8. **Grace enables me** to treat my closest relationships with courtesy.
9. **As I learn to understand** how God reaches out in love to communicate with me, I am empowered do the same with others around me. (*my friends, my mate, and others*)

DOES OUR SUGGESTION SEEM SIMPLISTIC—that when YOU are changed by the Gospel it has a powerful effect on the people around you? Try it! In social relationships, everyone tends to "hide" their sin, to be defensive and pretend they are perfect. JUST ONE HUMBLE CHRISTIAN thrown into that mix can begin to transform the whole thing. IF ONE PERSON challenges the "I AM PERFECT" lie, admits their sinfulness, talks about and points to the MIGHTY CHRIST that loves, forgives, and clothes them in his righteousness, the effect can be astounding. People will be drawn to Christ as he shows himself to them through you!

NOW WE MOVE *specifically* into the area of home and family relationships. This is the place where the Gospel needs to work the most powerfully because it is there that the same sinners rub up against one another day after day after day—with no way of escape!

LAW & GRACE ORIENTED HOMES

COMPARED & CONTRASTED

THE LAW ORIENTED HOME

The Way We Relate When the Law is King

1. I think that **my rules**, my wise parenting and my training will produce godly children.
2. I am **inconsistent**. (at times demand perfection, other times overlook disobedience)
3. I **correct my family** as if I was a perfect person. This destroys your relationships. Everyone (except you) knows that you are a big imperfect sinner. They see your sin all the time.
4. I **"nag"** more than I **carefully discipline**. I think that my words can change behavior.
5. The **outward behavior of my children is very important**. I deal almost exclusively with surface problems. I am satisfied if they obey enough to "look good" to outsiders.
6. **There are many rules in my home**. I find myself creating a new set of rules for each new situation. (But, I fear that I may only be enforcing laws instead of molding my child's conscience to obey out of love for God, myself and others.)
7. I am **depressed** when I think I've failed — and **proud** when I think I've succeeded.
8. I deal with problems out of **guilt**. (*In fact, sometimes I'm "dripping with guilt."*)
9. I make quick judgments before listening to my family to get all the facts.
10. If my children **suffer**, it must prove that I have done something wrong. Therefore I must try to protect my children from suffering. (something even God doesn't do with me)
11. I wonder if I am **"using my children"** to make me look like a good parent and Christian.
12. I fear that my children may be beginning to despise me and my rules.

THE GOSPEL ORIENTED HOME

"PARENTING BY GRACE" — The Way We Relate When Christ is King

1. I have faith in God's promises to feed and clothe my family.

FAITH IN THE PROMISES OF: Matt. 6:24-34 - 24 "No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money. 25 "Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more important than food, and the body more important than clothes? 26 Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? 27 Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life? 28 "And why do you worry about clothes? See how the lilies of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. 29 Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. 30 If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? 31 So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' 32 For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. 33 But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. 34 Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.



Fig. 14-4

THINK IT OVER: When we are struggling financially to meet our basic needs of food, clothing, shelter and school fees, how can we as parents show our children in very practical ways how a "childlike faith" in our Heavenly Father feels, talks and acts?

YOUR NOTES:

2. I have faith in God's promise to save my children as the gospel is lived before them and presented to them.

THE PRINCIPLES IN:

1 Pet. 3:1-4 - Wives, in the same way be submissive to your husbands so that, if any of them do not believe the word, they may be won over **without words by the behavior** of their wives. 2 when they see the purity and reverence of your lives. 3 Your beauty should not come from outward adornment, such as braided hair and the wearing of gold jewelry and fine clothes. 4 Instead, it should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God's sight.

NOTE: Christian Legalism, typical of its negative way of looking at everything, sees in this passage a commandment *against* all jewelry and braided hair. But Peter's words are positive. He wants us to be beautiful on the inside rather than trusting in external trinkets. The point is that when we take care to maintain a heart-relationship with Jesus, his beauty will radiate from us—from the inside out.

There is an OT parallel in this proverb: "Like a gold ring in a pig's snout is a beautiful woman who shows no discretion." — Prov. 11:22)

Eph. 6:4 - Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord. ("exasperate" is *παροργίζω* - para + orgizo - to stir up to wrath.)

Col. 3:20, 21 - *Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord.*

21 *Fathers, do not embitter your children, or they will become discouraged.* (to "embitter" is, "do not provoke" is from ἐρεθίζω - and "dis-heartened" is ἀθυμέω - to be without ardor)

THINK IT OVER: Where does parental authority come from? From mere biology? From our physical size or greater age and experience? We can use these things to gain authority, but they are poor substitutes for the beauty of a "childlike faith" that shines from a heart that is humble and submissive to Christ. The "authority" of biology, size and age will pass away, but the testimony of a life lived "In Christ" is the unfading legacy we really want to leave our children.

YOUR NOTES:

3. **I am free to accept the child the way he is** — and trust the Holy Spirit to bring the deep and lasting changes that are needed.

PRINCIPLE IN: Phil. 3:3-11 - *Paul deals with his "spiritual children" - I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, 4 always offering prayer with joy in my every prayer for you all, 5 in view of your participation in the gospel from the first day until now. 6 For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus. 7 For it is only right for me to feel this way about you all, because I have you in my heart, since both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel, you all are partakers of grace with me. 8 For God is my witness, how I long for you all with the affection of Christ Jesus. And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in real knowledge and all discernment, 10 so that you may approve the things that are excellent, in order to be sincere and blameless until the day of Christ; 11 having been filled with the fruit of righteousness which comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.*

THINK IT OVER: "Accepting my child the way he is" does not mean that you don't want to see changes in him or her, but an admission that you cannot change a heart! And, your child must never feel, "Father and mother don't like me because I am not like so and so." They need to feel from you the same loving acceptance that your Heavenly Father gives you, imperfect son or daughter that you are! Otherwise, their "obedience" will be that of a slave, not a son or daughter, and they will fear you, but not really love you with a happy heart. OUR ATTITUDES TOWARD GOD, AND OUR PERCEPTION OF HIS ATTITUDES TOWARD US ARE MIRRORED IN OUR PARENTING.

YOUR NOTES:

4. **I am confident that grace enables me** to teach my children. I understand that suffering and discipline are "means of grace" that God will use to bring them to Himself.

PRINCIPLE IN: Rom. 5:3-5 (Don't "short circuit" the process of sanctification God has set up.) *And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation works patience; And patience, experience, and experience, hope; 5 And hope does not lead to shame, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.*

APPLICATION: You don't want to put stumbling blocks in your child's way, but neither do you want to run ahead of them to remove every stumbling stone. If you do, you will actually cripple them, and they know how to make mistakes and benefit from them.

YOUR NOTES:

5. I remember that loving discipline (though important and necessary) can not take away sins, but is God's good way of reaching my child's conscience.



"Akoko nan tia ba, na ankum ba." — "The mother hen steps on her chicks, but does not kill them." (The Adinkra symbol "states" the Akan proverb. - Ghana)

Fig. 14-5

THINK IT OVER: In **Ephesians 6:4**, Paul contrasts "exasperating" our children with "brining them up" in the training and instruction of the Lord. (The Greek verb is ἐκτρέφω — to nourish up to maturity, to nurture, to nurse—give suck)

Some parents nurture their children like tender plants in a garden, while others "let them grow up" like weeds in an open field. Which parenting style describes yours?

How purposeful and thoughtful is your discipline with your children? Is it aimed at *punishment* (retribution), or *training* (reaching the conscience of the child so that deep and lasting change can take place)?

YOUR NOTES:

6. I take my children in my arms, look them in the eyes and give them my love, praise, appreciation and approval. They feel loved, accepted—delighted in.

PRINCIPLE IN: **Matt. 23:37**, and **Mark 10:13-16**: God's tender love — expressed in both actions, words and word pictures — is our model of parenting. —

Matt. 23:37 - "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing..."

Mark 10:13-16 - People were bringing little children to Jesus to have him touch them, but the disciples rebuked them. 14 When Jesus saw this, he was indignant. He said to them, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. 5 I tell you the truth, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it." 16 And he took the children in his arms, put his hands on them and blessed them.



Fig. 14-6

QUESTION: Do your children feel "delighted in" by you—or that they are merely being *endured*?

NOTE: One mother confessed that she and many other parents act as if God had enacted some sort of law against being kind to one's own children! Harshness and impatience, she said, are the order of the day in many homes.

Do you give your children focused love and attention? Do you look at them when you talk to them, or "talk at" them when they are behind you?

Have you ever looked into your child's eyes and told him or her that you love them?

They need that kind of love from you every day! It will feed their tender souls, and help provide a foundation for Gospel faith—help them believe that God loves them too.

AND, they don't outgrow this need when they are teenagers—or adults!

FATHERS! If you show patience, tenderness and love toward your children, they will find it much easier to believe that God their Heavenly Father tenderly loves and cares for them. Without it, they will struggle to believe that for the rest of their lives.

YOUR NOTES:

7. I am free to ask forgiveness for myself (yes, especially from my children), and I am very free to give it!

THE PRINCIPLE in Eph. 4:29-5:2 - *Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. 30 And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. 31 Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. 32 Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you. 5:1 Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children 2 and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.*

THINK IT OVER: What sort of impact will it have on the future of your children's attitude (or that of an unbelieving spouse) regarding the Gospel if the Holy Spirit produces fruit such as this in your life?

YOUR NOTES:

8. I always discipline/correct them as a fellow sinner, and freely admit my own sins to them.

THE PRINCIPLE of sharing in his reader's weaknesses in Paul's letters: 2 Cor. 11:29,30 - *"Who is weak, and I do not feel weak? Who is led into sin, and I do not inwardly burn? If I must boast, I will boast of the things that show my weakness."*

Rom. 8:26 - (NOTE: the use of "we") *And in the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words...*

CONSIDER: Our children (and spouses) know what sinners we really are. If we are defensive, try to defend and excuse ourselves in our homes, how will that reflect on the Gospel? It will discourage everyone! If the GOSPEL can't change us, what can?

PARENTS most of all need to use these simple words—often: *"I was wrong. I sinned against God and you. I am sorry. I repent. Will you forgive me?"* Teach your children to be repentant by modeling it before them.

Some parents argue that if we confess our sins to our children that they will "lose respect" for us. Are they correct? What do you think is behind this idea?

YOUR NOTES:

9. Because I know that rules (neither God's nor mine) cannot produce in them a love for God or others, I repent, love, pray, and trust the Holy Spirit to work on the root problems in my children as I bring them to the surface.

PRINCIPLE in 2 Cor. 3:2-11 - *You are our letter, written in our hearts, known and read by all men; 3 being manifested that you are a letter of Christ, cared for by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone, but on tablets of human hearts. 4 And such confidence we have through Christ toward God. 5 Not that we are adequate in ourselves to consider anything as coming from ourselves, but our adequacy is from God. 6 who also made us adequate as servants of a new covenant, not of the letter, but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life. 7 But if the*

ministry of death, in letters engraved on stones, came with glory, so that the sons of Israel could not look intently at the face of Moses because of the glory of his face, fading as it was. 8 how shall the ministry of the Spirit fail to be even more with glory? 9 For if the ministry of condemnation has glory, much more does the ministry of righteousness abound in glory. 10 For indeed what had glory, in this case has no glory on account of the glory that surpasses it. 11 For if that which fades away was with glory, much more that which remains is in glory.

I know that I cannot change the members of my family by my harsh and repeated corrections. On the contrary, these will cause their sin to either break out into open rebellion or be driven deeply underground. Therefore, I parent humbly, lovingly—from my heart to theirs.

YOUR NOTES:

QUESTIONS FOR SMALL-GROUP DISCUSSION *(Do one in each group, then report.)*

1. **IN OUR HOMES, how can we deal with thorny issues like:** dirty clothes that need to be picked up, children's rooms that look like pigs live in them, (or if you are single, your roommate's side of the flat), and financial and other resources that must be wisely managed to avoid chaos or poverty—without resorting to nagging, an oppressive atmosphere of legalism, criticism, cruelty or guilt or manipulation? *Is this even possible?*

EXAMPLE: The Burdelsons were our neighbors in the US. The husband refused to pick his dirty underwear, so his wife *glued them to the floor!* What did he do? He went shopping and bought all-new ones!

YOUR NOTES:

2. **IS THERE A DIFFERENCE IN "BEATING" A CHILD AND "SPANKING" A CHILD? WHAT?**

How could a parent use physical punishment in a godly way? Try to describe a practical scenario in how this would look. **CAN YOU CREATE A MINI-DRAMA?**

AN EXAMPLE: The Burdelsons used to "discipline" their children by *beating* them. (Not merely "spanking.") Even though the parents disciplined their two children, Scotty, their son (3 yrs. old) used to threaten to "beat" our son John Wade (1 ½ yrs. old). Their daughter (4 yrs. old) used to reach through the wire fence, grab our son's hair, and hold him against the fence, laughing while he cried. What was the possible source of this early childhood aggression, cruelty and habitual disobedience?

YOUR NOTES:

3. **SUPPOSE YOUR CHILD CONSTANTLY DISTRACTS PEOPLE DURING THE WORSHIP SERVICE by calling attention to himself or herself.** What could you do to *reach the child's conscience* to correct this behavior, rather than just being satisfied if you can somehow force them to be still only on the outside?

YOUR NOTES:



The Five Levels of Communication

A Small-Group Workshop

Level Five: Chattering Casually about Current Events, Activities, Jokes

Examples: *"Have you had rain at your place? We've had over 2 cm.!"*
"This weather is wonderful... If you're a fish!"
"What are we having for dinner tonight?"

Note: This is "no risk" communication as there is no possibility for disagreement, and no strong opinions or emotions are expressed.

Level Four: Reporting Facts about Others

Examples: *"Mwangi broke his arm on Monday."*
"My husband got a new job yesterday!"

Note: This is also "no risk."

Level Three: Sharing My Own Ideas and Judgments about Events and Ideas

Examples: *"I think Ocholla will surely win the parliamentary seat!"*
"The sermon on Sunday was full of bad theology."
"Rain was forecast for today, but I don't think we'll get a drop."

Note: There is some risk at this level since someone can always offer another opinion. Example: *"Yes, but meteorologists are trained scientists and are usually quite accurate in their forecasts. Why do you question them?"*

Level Two: Sharing My Feelings and Emotions

Examples: *"I really like Joseph and Grace. They are nice to be with."*
"I'm glad we're having fish. It's my favorite food!"
"I love this kanga my husband bought me. Don't you think it's pretty?"

Note: There is increased risk at this level. Your heart is exposed to the other person. Not only have you shared an idea (as in Level Three), but how you feel about something. You are vulnerable and could be wounded.

Level One: Full Emotional and Personal Communication (no hiding)

Examples: *"John, I have really been struggling with the discipline of my children. Can we have lunch this week. I need some advice and prayer."*
"Helen, I know it's hard to cope with your divorce. When Steven left me it took me over a year to put my life back together. Why don't we meet this week and talk about how to deal with the hurt?"

Note: This is "high risk" communication. You are sharing your deepest struggles and making yourself vulnerable. You are allowing people to know the "real you" and enabling them to open up as well.

¹ "Levels of Communication" defined by Harcourt House Publishers, Irvine, CA. Adapted for *SONSHIP for Africa*



COMMUNICATION QUESTIONS

1. What are some reasons that some people may communicate only at levels four and five?
 - a.
 - b.

2. Under what conditions are you comfortable responding at level one or two?
 - a.
 - b.

3. At which level do you usually communicate...
 - a. with your husband or wife (if married, roommate if single)? Level ____
 - b. with your children? Level ____
 - c. with your friends of the same sex? Level ____

Do you think *your family feels* that they really "know your heart?"

YES NO (circle one, and explain)

Do you think your level of communication affects *how much they feel* you love them?

YES NO (circle one, and explain)

4. At which level do your family members usually communicate with you?
 - a. your spouse (if married, roommate if single)? Level ____
 - b. your children? Level ____
 - c. friends of the same sex? Level ____
5. At which level would you LIKE for your family members to communicate with you?
LEVEL ____ WHY?

6. At which level does your pastor communicate in his sermons? Your Sonship leader?
LEVEL ____ LEVEL ____

7. What can your family (parents, spouse and children) and your friends do to make it easier for you to communicate with them on levels one and two?

8. At which level do you usually communicate with God? What might improve that?
LEVEL ____ (See Hosea 14:1-8; Ps. 51)

9. At what level do these persons communicate with us? God the Father? LEVEL ____ (Hos. 11:1ff)
Jesus? LEVEL ____ (Jn. 12:27; 15:1-7 — esp. vs. 15) Paul? LEVEL ____ (Eph. 6:21)

10. Discuss: Why would daily "believing the Gospel" deepen our communication with our family and friends? (Think about the ideas: "hiding," "safe," "clothed in Christ.")

Gospel Manners

Christian Love & Cultural Expectations

Manners in a Changing Africa

"Abbaan lafa taa-e — ilmi bartchumarra taa-e."

The father sat on the ground; the son sat on the stool.

— Oromo Proverb, Ethiopia —



Fig. 15-1

GOSPEL MANNERS

Esteeming Others Better than Ourselves

"I came into your house. You did not give me any water for my feet, but she wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. You did not give me a kiss, but this woman, from the time I entered, has not stopped kissing my feet. You did not put oil on my head, but she has poured perfume on my feet. Therefore, I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven - for she loved much. But he who has been forgiven little loves little." - Luke 7:44, 45

INTRODUCTION

IT is news to no one that the African continent is still grappling with a radical political and social upheaval that began just over a century ago.

Politically, the shift away from traditional tribal rule has been almost total. It began with the invasion by foreign powers intent on exploiting Africa's wealth, their establishment of colonial empires, and their carving up of the continent to suit their self-serving purposes. The national independence movement of the 1960s gave us scores of one-party republics under one-man rule, and those are rapidly evolving into multi-party democracies. But this political revolution on the continent has much deeper and more far-reaching consequences—social ones.



Fig. 15-2

The social fabric of old Africa has been torn apart. The mass exodus of people from the tribal homelands that began fifty years ago continues unabated. Tens of thousands of people whose ancestors have lived in rural tribal homelands for hundreds of years move into Africa's cities *every month!* People from scores of tribal cultures with different ways of speaking, eating, dressing, marrying, worshipping, and burying their dead are being thrown together in one huge container.

What has been the social and cultural impact of this mass-migration? The first generation that moves into the city retains much of its tribal identity. But in a process

sociologists call "urbanization," the second generation begins to see its uniqueness stripped away. In the collective melting pot of the city, there is immense social heat and pressure to conform. We are poured into molds and emerge looking, talking, dressing and acting alike—"Waciti" speaking "kiciti." Radio, television and national languages accelerate the process. This is not a moral issue, so we can't label it good or bad, but because it

does destroy beloved old ways, we can call it sad. Kenya, for instance, will be a poorer place when the last Maasai has donned trousers.

Tolerance is one benefit of urbanization. City children born of parents from mono-tribal settings go to school in a multi-tribal context and are baffled by their parents' persistent suspicions of "those people" from other tribes. James Kang'ong'ol, a Christian

friend popped in one day for tea and a chat. He confessed to being distressed by his son's desire to travel upcountry to spend his school break in the home of a Kalenjin friend. He had warned his son, "Don't you realize you are Kikuyu? If you go there, those Kalenjin will finish (kill) you!" His son's reply? "But father, he is not a Kalenjin; he is my friend!" "I can see," James reflected, "that my generation is the problem, and until we die, this country will never know peace." Are tribes bad? No, tribalism is bad. Not only is tribalism the arch-enemy of nationhood, it is contrary to the spirit of the Gospel. One day, the Gospel and the city will "finish" tribalism. The Gospel will play its part by empowering us to seek the glory of God by loving our neighbors—all of them.

But it is the **negative social and spiritual impact of urbanization** that has prompted us to include a lesson on "manners" in *SONSHIP for Africa*. In the village, the rules that governed personal relationships were highly developed, well understood, and respected by all. Village life was not heaven, but it was much more orderly, peaceful and people-friendly than what has replaced it. (My family lived in rural Ukambani twenty-five years ago, so we know this first-hand.) The old tribal social order is passing away, but nothing of value has come to replace it.

Like the larger cities of North America, Latin America, Europe and the Orient, African urban centers tend to be frantically paced, cold, cruel, impersonal, dehumanizing and often dangerous places. It is as if all over the world, people take leave of their senses when they

move into cities. It causes one to wonder if there is not something inherently unhealthy, even evil, about cities—the "spirit of Babel," perhaps? (Gen. 11) It is not difficult to find people in all walks of life, politicians, civil servants, bank employees, people in the transportation industry, medical services, students of all ages—and even pastors—who would probably behave in a more civil manner but for the influence of the city. As it is, they habitually act toward one another in ways that would have been *unthinkable* in the traditional village. We have lost something—something precious. We bring this up because we are allowing the city to destroy our manners and it costs God his glory.



Nairobi, Kenya

Fig. 15-3

"Metse e melle llotloana—kantle."

"Cities are very beautiful—from the outside."

— Sesotho proverb, Lesotho —

How should African Christians live in these days of such rapid, pervasive social change? Is there such a thing as "Christian manners"—a set of *Biblical* guidelines that transcend tribal cultures? Are there rules for godly social relationships that can guide us amid the complexities of urban life? How can believers in the new generation relate with love and respect to their elders who still cherish the old ways? Are loving relationships even *possible* in the insanity of this modern age? How can we show esteem and honor for one another

in a culture that seems determined to play "catch up" with the spiritually bankrupt "developed" nations—nations in which success is defined as grabbing enough land, money and possessions to make your neighbor envious? (In the West, our motto is: "The one who dies with the most 'toys' wins.") Paul told us, "Don't be overcome by evil, but overcome

evil with good" (Rom. 12:21) — a tall order!

Can the Gospel give us the will to swim against the polluted currents of the secular city so that we actually become more loving and more sensitive to others? Provoking us to look for Biblical answers to these questions is the purpose of this lesson. I cannot give you the answers, but I have been in Africa long enough to know a few of the questions. Jesus has African answers for African Christians for the African context. So pray for the Holy Spirit to fill your heart with a desire to love others. If the glory of God is your goal, the Spirit will teach you. Then, you can teach me! — JWL —

I. WHAT ARE "MANNERS?" Manners Defined

Manners are the words and actions in a culture used by the people of that culture to communicate their love and respect for one another.

A. THINK IT THROUGH: ARE MANNERS A BIBLICAL OR WORLDLY DEVICE?

Paul encouraged the Philippian believers this way: "Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves." Look at this passage in Luke 7 again, but from the viewpoint of manners. (We used it in S-9.)

Now one of the Pharisees invited Jesus to have dinner with him, so he went to the Pharisee's house and reclined at the table. When a woman who had lived a sinful life in that town learned that Jesus was eating at the Pharisee's house, she brought an alabaster jar of perfume, and as she stood behind him at his feet weeping, she began to wet his feet with her tears. Then she wiped them with her hair, kissed them and poured perfume on them.

When the Pharisee who had invited him saw this, he said to himself, "If this man were a prophet, he would know who is touching him and what kind of woman she is—that she is a sinner."

Jesus answered him, "Simon, I have something to tell you." "Tell me, teacher," he said. "Two men owed money to a certain money lender. One owed him five hundred denarii, and the other fifty.

Neither of them had the money to pay him back, so he canceled the debts of both. Now which of them will love him more?" Simon replied, "I suppose the one who had the bigger debt canceled." "You have judged correctly," Jesus said.

Then he turned toward the woman and said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? She came into your house. You did not give me any water for my feet, but she wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. You did not give me a kiss, but this woman, from the time I entered, has not stopped kissing my feet. You did not put oil on my head, but she has poured perfume on my feet. Therefore, I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven—for she loved much. But he who has been forgiven little loves little."

— Luke 7:36-47 (NIV)

Simon the Pharisee was not a man who esteemed others better than himself. Quite the contrary, he esteemed *himself* better than every one else—even God's Messiah. But if Simon was so rude to Jesus, why did he invite him to dinner in the first place? There may be a clue in Matthew 23:5 in which Jesus says of the Pharisees, "Everything they do is done for men to see," that is, their actions are calculated to earn them the praise of men. That is the most likely reason that Simon called Jesus to his home—to bask in the glow of his popularity. Simon used people; he didn't love people. Speaking of that, imagine how your social stock would soar if you could convince some famous person (like a great politician, athlete or entertainer) to come to your home for dinner! (Nelson Mandela, the Pope, etc.) Tempting, isn't it? How we love to boast!

Whatever the reason for the invitation, Simon did not extend to Jesus two cultural courtesies that were shown to all guests in those days: he did not greet him with a kiss (as in Ethiopia), or have the servant wash his feet. Simon was incredibly rude. He had bad manners. Jesus noticed it immediately, was justifiably offended by it, and, like the King he was, rebuked Simon at his own dinner table on account of it!

We Christians can become "Simons"—thoughtless, self-centered and rude toward others. But the Holy Spirit has other plans for us! He wants to change us into gentlemen (gentle-men) and gentle women whose esteem for others bears witness to the transforming power of the Gospel by loving others the way Jesus did.

A. When you think of "GOOD MANNERS" in your culture, what is the first example that comes to mind?

YOUR RESPONSE:

B. When you think of "BAD MANNERS," what example first comes to mind?

YOUR RESPONSE:

II. HINDRANCES TO GOOD MANNERS

SIX Possible Stumblingblocks to Our Having Good Manners (A through E)

A. We may value our *personal rights* or our *culture* more than loving others.

We may misuse our "freedom in Christ" to excuse rudeness. (We return evil with evil.)

We may think, "*I want to be my own person!*" (We are seduced by the culture of "me-ism" and become "I-centered"—I am number one; I deserve the best, etc.)

We take pride in being *liberated moderns* who have broken with the ways of those "backward old people" in the villages. (Whenever I yield, and I sometimes have, to the temptation to ridicule someone for being backward, it makes me feel good about myself—a counterfeit righteousness that grieves the Holy Spirit.)

We may reason: "*People will just have to accept me the way I am!*" (In other words, we think that we are above the laws of men and have a right to be boorish if we want.)

We may fail to examine our culture in the light of the Gospel. (Every culture has deeply embedded sin-patterns in it. Thus, "acting naturally" may hurt others.)

BUT, THE GOSPEL TEACHES US: "*You, my brothers, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature; rather, serve one another in love. The entire law is summed up in a single command: Love your neighbor as yourself.*" — Gal. 5:13,14

B. We may believe that good manners are *insincere*.

"*Kawakuzi: awakula ennombo ku bugenyi.*" "A snob (always) apes the manners he has seen, when visiting." — Luganda proverb, Uganda (He uses "manners" to try to get respect for himself—not in order to show genuine respect to others.)

Thus the French novelist Honoré de Balzac (1799–1850) wrote: "*Manners are the hypocrisy of a nation.*" — French novelist

It is true that manners may be used hypocritically to cover up the way we really feel towards others. (Many observers have noted that one never knows what the members of Britain's Royal Family are *really* thinking because protocol has prohibited them from expressing themselves openly and honestly.)

THE GOSPEL TEACHES: "*Love must be sincere.*" (Greek: *ἀνυπόκριτος*— *an* (without) + *hypocritas* (hypocrisy).) — Rom. 12:9

The proper response to the temptation to be hypocritical, however, is repentance—not bad manners! As we ask the Holy Spirit to purify our motives and fill us with his fruit, good manners will be a joy. *Loving and esteeming others can be fun!*

Good Manners in Other Lands (NOTE: *As you read these words and actions, ask yourself how they do their work to show another person that they are loved and respected. (It may take some imagination on your part.)*

1. In the United States

a. WORDS

We say, "*Please,*" or "*Thank you*" when asking for or receiving something.

We say, "*Excuse me,*" or "*Sorry, please forgive me*" if we accidentally bump another person—in the aisle of a shop or on the sidewalk, for instance.

b. ACTIONS

A gentleman always opens the door for a lady to let her pass through first.

At the table, you: always put the napkin on your lap before eating, never put your elbows on the table (forearms are sometimes allowed), never begin

eating before the prayer is said, and, never start eating your desert (such as ice cream, cake, pie, etc.) until the hostess has taken at least one bite from hers.

2. In Korea

a. WORDS

After a satisfying meal, you should let out a loud **BELCH** to show appreciation!

b. ACTIONS

You must never stand higher than another person when speaking to him.

When sitting, never point *the sole of your foot* at someone, or you insult him.

3. In Japan

a. WORDS

You do not blame or accuse someone or they "lose face." (are shamed)

b. ACTIONS

You must use your chopsticks to finish *the last tiny grain of rice* on your plate.

When greeting someone, you bow low. (foreigners, they say, refuse to bow low)

- ◆ These may seem strange to you—the manners from another culture always do! But, they are extremely important ways that people show love and respect.
- ◆ If we ignore manners, we offend people. We appear selfish, and they feel despised and not at all loved. So, if we fail to show good manners, we fail to glorify God!

C. We may be too busy thinking of, living for, and pleasing ourselves.

"It is more comfortable for me, in the long run, to be rude than polite."

— Wyndham Lewis (1882–1957), British author, painter.

If we are just concerned about "Number One," showing good manners—which requires a heart for others—will be the last thing on our minds.

D. We may feel that manners are inefficient—a big waste of time.

Indeed, good manners do take time! They may slow you down! (To stop and greet someone when you are in a rush, to allow a pedestrian to cross instead of threatening to run him over with your vehicle, to hold the door open for a person carrying bundles, etc. are little ways we can "die" to ourselves and show love to others.

Imprint this in your mind and heart:

Love is not efficient!

Loving others took a lot of Jesus' time, and Paul said, *"without love, I am nothing."*

— 1 Corinthians 13:2

E. We may have deep-seated prejudices against certain types of people that have already destroyed our esteem for them.

Who do you habitually not esteem? Are there groups or classes of people that you hold in low regard, dislike or even hate?

1. a tribe or tribes against which you have a deep-seated prejudice
2. a nationality you despise
3. a sex (men or women) social class (people living in slums or vast estates), or age-group of people (children, the aged)
4. people from rival schools or football teams or businesses, etc.

III. THE MANNERS PROJECT: DEVELOPING CHRISTIAN MANNERS FOR THE CULTURAL CONTEXT OF THE 'NEW AFRICA'

OUR THESIS: God wants you love and esteem others by observing the manners and customs expected in your society. (NOTE: Paul exempts you from those that might defile your conscience because they are 'loaded' with pagan religious symbolism. - Rom. 14) (For example: birth, funeral and agricultural rituals relating to harvest, etc.)

'MANNERS' can easily be reduced to this: socially expected WORDS or ACTIONS that flow from a desire to ESTEEM others better than ourselves.

A. Can you define the cultural behaviors in *your part of Africa* that communicate the following things in the specified settings.

What is your COUNTRY _____ TRIBE _____



POSITIVE

1. IN YOUR BIRTH FAMILY (POSITIVE)

a. love and respect for your parents and grandparents

words:

actions:

b. love and respect for the extended family of your parents (aunts, uncles, etc.)

words:

actions:

c. respect for your mother-in-law

words:

actions:

d. respect for a brother or sister who is older than you (in an older age-group)

words:

actions:

2. IN YOUR SCHOOL (POSITIVE)

a. respect for your teachers at school

words:

actions:

b. consideration for fellow students (now, or when you were schooling)



a. of the same sex

words:

actions:

b. of the opposite sex

words:

actions:



NEGATIVE: What words or actions may communicate the following?

1. hardness of heart or indifference towards the feelings of others

words:

actions:

2. disregard for others while eating together

words:

actions:

3. disrespect for one's elders/parents/family.

words:

actions:

B. THINK THROUGH AND DISCUSS

1. Relationships between Age Groups

- a) **Is there an unspoken right to "kick" the people in the next age-group lower than yours? i.e. Does belonging to a certain "age group" give you and your age-mates certain rights and privileges to abuse or take advantage of lower age groups? Or, does being in a certain group rob you of certain rights or privileges compared to those older than you?**

YOUR NOTES:

- b) **If there are such unwritten rules (as mentioned above) whether spoken or unspoken, are they different in the following settings:**

YOUR NOTES: (Think: Is it possible to disagree respectfully if they are pressuring you to participate in a sinful traditional cultural practice? How?)

- **grandparents' home or village**
- **parents' home or village**
- **an educational institution (or urban context)**

2. THINK IT THROUGH: How would the following relationships look/work *without the Gospel*. THEN, consider how **"believing the Gospel"** (resting consciously in the righteousness of Christ) might alter each of the relationships as YOU or the person listed, relied on the Holy Spirit to replace self-love with love for others.

a) A husband & his wife

without the Gospel (living in a self-centered way)

with the Gospel (when consciously resting in Christ's righteousness)

b) A mother and her children -

without the Gospel (living in a self-centered way)

with the Gospel (when resting in Christ's righteousness)



Fig. 15-4

c) Adults to children — not your own -

without the Gospel (living in a self-centered way)

with the Gospel (when consciously resting in Christ's righteousness)

d) Children toward animals -

without the Gospel (living in a self-centered way)

with the Gospel (when consciously resting in Christ's righteousness)

e) Public Servants (employees at business you patronize, bank tellers, waiters at restaurants, clerks in shops, etc.) -

without the Gospel (living in a self-centered way)

with the Gospel (when consciously resting in Christ's righteousness)

f) Customers (people you are serving) viz. reversal of the servant / served role)

without the Gospel (living in a self-centered way)

with the Gospel (when consciously resting in Christ's righteousness)

Matthew 20:20-28 Then the mother of Zebedee's sons came to Jesus with her sons and kneeling down, asked a favor of him. "What is it you want?" he asked. She said, "Grant that one of these two sons of mine may sit at your right and the other at your left in your kingdom." "You don't know what you are asking."

Jesus said to them. "Can you drink the cup I am going to drink?" "We can," they answered.

Jesus said to them, "You will indeed drink from my cup, but to sit at my right or left is not for me to grant. These places belong to those for whom they have been prepared by my Father." When the ten heard about this, they were indignant with the two brothers.

Jesus called them together and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave—just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

WHAT RELEVANCE DOES THE ABOVE PASSAGE HAVE TO THE WAY WE WOULD PLAY THE SIX ROLES (a — f) WE LISTED ON S15-7?

C. THE FOLLOWING PRACTICES ARE FREQUENTLY DISCUSSED—EITHER COMPLEMENTING THE PEOPLE WHO HONOR THEM, OR AS COMPLAINTS AGAINST THOSE WHO DISREGARD THEM.

WHAT, IF ANYTHING, DO THEY HAVE TO DO WITH LOVE AND THE GOSPEL?

What are the issues of love involved in each?

1. being on time to meetings & events

2. staying very late (too late?) at someone's home (or always appearing at meal times, etc.)

3. queue jumping

4. asking for things like help, money, transportation, things (Kenyans call this "begging people.")

Swahili proverb: "*Ujirani ni fedha katika kasha.*" ("Having neighbors is like (having) money in a box.") This sounds wonderful, and could be said quite innocently. But, one wonders: *How does it feel to be the neighbor?* Honored? Used?

5. borrowing personal property (viz: the whole eastern concept of "personal property" vs. communal property)

Will this change as Africa transitions from village life to an urban setting? How does this work in a boarding school? (Remember, when discussing these, they can be controversial. Your object: does the GOSPEL speak to this and how? (Is saying "no" or "yes" every time the answer?))

Swahili proverbs (These sound like opposites. Which do you prefer? Why?)

a. "*Chetu si changu.*" — "Ours is not mine."

b. "*Heri kukosa kama kukopa.*" — "It is better to lack something than to borrow."

6. the concept of having a “personal space” into which others should not physically intrude Is this African? If so, does it differ in rural and urban areas? Are Africa, Europe, the USA, the Orient different? (*“I need my space”* is a Western mantra.)

Think about it: What is the number of cm. (or inches or metres or feet) *from your body* that you consider as “your personal space” that you don’t want people to stand in (if any)?

DISCUSS: Does this differ with, sexes, ages, tribal cultures (Nilotes, Bantus, Wazungu, etc.)? How?

7. hospitality (especially in serving tea, food to guests, etc.) — think of the expectations of a host from his guest, or what a guest expects from his host)

What are the unspoken “rules” for how to treat guests in your culture?

a. You “must” ...

b. You “must not” ...

8. correcting other people — pointing out where they are wrong.
What are the “boundaries” (unwritten rules) about confronting others with THEIR wrongs or mistakes—publicly—privately? (We have noticed that if a speaker makes a mistake in some countries in Africa, he or she may be corrected by a large group—unheard of in the Orient.)

What about the “shame factor?” THINK: If you went to someone as a fellow sinner/repenter, would it make any difference? What?

V. THE PRACTICE OF GOSPEL MANNERS (Your “Final Exam” in Christian Manners)

Remember: Manners is nothing more than *a way to love and esteem others for Jesus’ sake.*

Here, we are not attempting to create a list of new laws, but to create a “1 Corinthians 13” for manners. Because we are easily blinded by our self-centeredness, it will help us to search for some of the specific ways that Christian love (the fruit of the Holy Spirit) should show itself in our relationships.

To live in these Christlike ways, we will need supernatural help. We are not naturally loving, giving people, so it will require the power of the Spirit to enable us to do these things.

Remember, our goal is not to try hard to obey social rules so that others will consider us “nice,” but to see the fruit of gospel faith grow in our lives so that others are loved and esteemed, and God is glorified.

A. IN PRAYERFUL AND CONSCIOUS RELIANCE ON THE HOLY SPIRIT (NOT IN YOUR OWN STRENGTH), WORK ON THE FOLLOWING: (Courtesy of Jack Miller)

1. PRACTICE THE GOLDEN RULE.

“Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.”

“So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets.” – Matthew 7:12

This "rule" of Jesus is *almost* always an unfailing guide—especially for **same-culture** situations.

It can, however, be dangerous—especially in cross-cultural contexts. Can you think of any of those situations? DISCUSS. (Examples: page S15-4, S15-5, B. 1,2,3)

- a)
- b)
- c)

2. ASK OTHERS FOR FEEDBACK ABOUT THE QUALITY OF YOUR MANNERS.

Simply assuming that you are a polite person is not enough. Love people enough to ask them to be honest with you about your level of "politeness" or lack of it. This is especially important if you are a student, missionary or visitor in a cross-cultural situation.

Remember, we are ambassadors of Christ, and, like it or not, people will judge Jesus by how loving and sensitive we are to them.

It might be embarrassing to ask others about your manners and find out that you have been making bad mistakes! But, if you remember that Jesus is your righteousness (not your manners), you can be brave enough to ask, listen, and make corrections—even if the truth may be painful to hear.

"Preach the gospel" to yourself, and if you have offended someone, ask forgiveness. Showing that kind of humility may be most powerful witness to the Gospel you ever give.

3. PUT OTHERS FIRST.

*"Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility, **consider others better than yourselves.** Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant..."* – Philippians 2:3-7

(Review: "Becoming Nothing" page S13-15)

4. SLOW DOWN! Stop being in such a hurry with people. Give them your heart.

Manners take time and experience to develop! Your family may not have trained you in "good manners." So, if it took you twenty or thirty years to develop your bad manners, you will not fix them in a week!

EXAMINE the underlying attitudes that led to the development of your "S.R." (style of relating) to others! ("Style of relating" is a counseling term from Dr. Larry Crabb.)

ASK YOURSELF:

- Do I *esteem* others? (Do I esteem anyone better than myself?)
- Am I selfish and self-centered?
- Do I always put myself first, push to be first in line, to get the first cup of tea, the best serving of meat, the most comfortable chair in the room, etc.?

"Ow'entuula mbi: y'alaba ekifo." "He who has no manners in seating himself: easily finds a place." (He elbows his way through the crowd—a queue breaker.)
—Luganda proverb, Uganda.

INVITE the Holy Spirit to expose your inner life to your own eyes.

(NOTE: This cannot do anything worse than kill you—and since you are supposed to be crucified with Christ, and also take up your cross and "die daily," it could be very helpful. What is there to fear? The Father loves you.)

5. ASK GOD TO GIVE YOU A POSITIVE VISION OF WHAT HE WANTS YOU TO BECOME, AND LET THAT VISION INCLUDE GRACIOUS MANNERS.

Galatians 5:22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.

6. SHOW AN INTEREST IN OTHERS / WORK ON YOUR LISTENING SKILLS

(Hearing and listening are not the same thing.)

Ask questions. Listen to the answers. Don't just talk about yourself and your own interests. REVIEW: "The 17th Century Believer's Prayer" on page S8-1)

7. SEEK OUT STRANGERS INSTEAD OF CONCENTRATING ON DOING EVERYTHING YOU CAN TO MAKE YOURSELF COMFORTABLE. (Heb.13:2 φιλοξενίας - love + strangers.)

8. REGULARLY THANK PEOPLE WHO SERVE OR BLESS YOU IN SOME WAY.

(Thank them face to face, or with written notes, or by ringing them up.)

9. REMEMBER IMPORTANT DAYS IN YOUR LOVED ONES' LIVES

(a good way to love them)

10. APOLOGIZE WILLINGLY and REGULARLY

(Instead of shifting the blame elsewhere)

11. REACH OUT TO A NON-CHRISTIAN OF A DIFFERENT TRIBE OR CULTURE TO BROADEN YOUR "MANNERS BASE."

(We live in a shrinking world. Become a "World Christian.")

B. "BEING FULL OF THE SPIRIT" AND "WALKING IN THE SPIRIT" WILL GIVE YOU GOOD MANNERS!

WHY IS THIS? *Because the primary fruit of the Spirit is love, and showing good manners is loving!*

ISN'T THIS AMAZING! EVERY ASPECT OF THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT relates to good manners! Christians who boast of being "filled with the Spirit" but who are impatient, selfish, self-serving, rude and loveless (have terrible manners) are deceiving themselves.

A FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT/GOSPEL MANNERS MINI-WORKSHOP ("LPPKGFGS")

INSTRUCTIONS: DEFINE each aspect of the Fruit of the Spirit as it appears in the form of "good manners" in your daily relationships at home, at work, in the classroom, etc. Be as specific as possible by naming a person, situation, and behavior.

- 1) **love** -
- 2) **joy** - EXAMPLE: I see a new Mercedes parked in front of my neighbor's house!
- 3) **peace** -
- 4) **patience** - EXAMPLE: I am hungry but my wife burned the ugali.
- 5) **kindness** -
- 6) **gentleness** - EXAMPLE: My son comes home with bad grades for the third time.
- 7) **faithfulness** -
- 8) **goodness** -
- 9) **self-control** - EXAMPLE: My neighbor's dog bites my leg and ruins my new dress.

CONCLUSION:

As you have seen, this lesson, like the rest, is one that you (and those who live and work with you) could greatly benefit from reviewing regularly.

But, there is an easier way: Let your chief aim in life be the love of God and others. This will ensure that you are asking, "WHAT DO THEY NEED? and HOW CAN I LOVE?" Instead of "HOW CAN I PLEASE MYSELF?" With a Gospel-focus, you will become more and more sensitive to the needs of others and develop the best manners in the world—for wherever God takes you in his world!

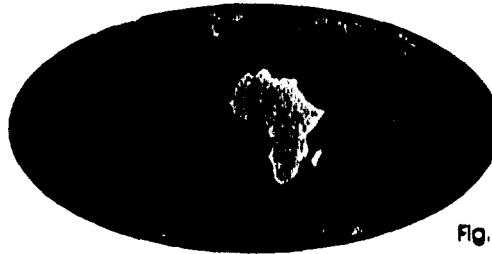


Fig. 15-5



BROKENNESS

S-16
AFRICA

A New Paradigm for Your Ministry

Gospel Treasure in Jars of Clay



THE Editor of the *DAILY NATION* of September 9, 1997 in Nairobi, dedicated half of his column to the death of Mobutu—the bottom half—just to the left of this cartoon. After remarking that in Africa, “you don’t say anything bad about someone who has died,” and that for most, death is “a private affair,” he goes on to say:

“We say straightaway that the end of the life of the man known variously as Joseph-Desire Mobutu and Sese Seko Kuku Ngbendu wa za Banga (the all-powerful warrior who goes from conquest to conquest, leaving fire in his wake) is very public business indeed across Africa as a major milestone towards the end of a dark era of bad governance excess. He was... the archetypal African dictator ruling in the name of a people for whom he had scant respect, a fact demonstrated by the massive looting of national resources by his court. He epitomized the Big Man syndrome in Africa... and what we and others across Africa deplore was a type, not so much the person whose life is no more.

The era of such Big Man nonsense as Mobutu symbolized is fast coming to a close. Africa has learned at terrible cost, that the Big Man is too easily a Big Liar, a Big Thief, a Big Murderer and Public Enemy Number One all rolled into one. Mobutu has gone the way of all flesh, the fire in his wake being the fact that his name will live in singular infamy, a fate that awaits all Big Man Thieves of Africa who have robbed their countries blind and bludgeoned the people into mass poverty.”

WHAT does Mobutism have to do with our lives and ministries as Christian lay-people, parents, Bible teachers, youth leaders, pastors and evangelists? Everything. At its root, “Mobutism” is an attitude—a way of looking at people under our authority. Its fruit, is a style of leadership—a way of exercising control over them. It can exist in any of our Christian social systems, large or small—in our homes, extended families, educational institutions, Sunday School classes, congregations or denominations. It can appear in many forms, from “nice” to brutal, but in any form, and wherever it appears, it dilutes the power of the Gospel message. *I know; I am a recovering “Mobutist!” —JWL*

BROKENNESS

A New Paradigm for Your Future Ministry (Gospel Treasure in Jars of Clay)

by John Wade Long, Jr.

"For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ. But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us." - II Corinthians 4:6-7

INTRODUCTION: Paul uses this metaphor "heavenly treasure in jars of clay" to express his amazement that God allows his glorious Gospel to be carried around inside very humble looking "clay pots"—sinners like you and me. Unfortunately, we easily miss what our "clay-potness" implies in terms of the humility that should characterize our ministry at home and in the church. Please think of this lesson as a heart-to-heart chat from one sinner, husband, parent, and pastor-teacher who knows firsthand how threatening the idea of "living broken" can be. I am a recovering Pharisee, not Rev. Humility, so whatever you need, I need. With that in mind, let's investigate together the connection between the amazing fruitfulness of the Apostle Paul's ministry, and the brokenness, weakness and humility that characterized it. The Gospel calls us to adopt Paul's clay pot self image, and resist the temptation to beautify our pot (physically or ministerially) so that people will admire us. Paul tells us to "adorn the doctrine of God" so that Jesus becomes attractive and people admire him. (Titus 2:9)

I. A PERSONAL CONFESSION AND CALL TO SELF-EXAMINATION

Many years ago I stumbled on the idea that there might be a connection between Paul's effectiveness in ministry and his weakness as a person. Stumbled, I say,

because to notice is not to understand, much less to practice. Paul puzzled me. His frequent confessions of sin (most notably in Romans 7) and references to his weakness fascinated and repelled me at the same time. I resisted their implications because deep inside me

was a "Mobutu" heart—rebellion against any suggestion that God might be calling me to adopt the same stance. I wanted an effective ministry, but I rejected the notion that Pauline type brokenness was necessary for Pauline type effectiveness. If God had gotten tough with me and had withdrawn his blessing from my ministry, I might have looked into the subject further, but I was quite fruitful, thank you. People got

converted, were discipled, and a few churches were planted—without my being broken. (see 1-21)

What I did not see was this: Many of my most faithful disciples were carbon copies of me—self-centered, self-reliant, unbroken, hard-headed and unteachable. They had learned my "strength!" Looking back, I can see that in whatever area of God's Kingdom I worked, there was conflict, gossip, blame-shifting and division. This was just "original sin," reasoned theirs. Sometimes the problems were already there, of course, but under my ministry, they rarely got better. Sometimes they grew. But in either case, I saw no connection between my style of ministry and the problems. So I continued my quest to be the



Incised Clay Bowl - Gold Coast

Fig. 16-2

most wise, effective and influential church leader I could possibly be. When I succeeded, I boasted; when I failed, I backed up, plotted another strategy, and charged at the problem (or person) again. Failure would have been unthinkable—proof that I had not been holy enough, clever enough or strong enough. The thought that I might have been “too strong” never entered my mind—nor did I let myself dwell on the truth that God delights in choosing *“the weak things of this world to confound the wise.”* (1 Cor. 1:27) Neither did I care to remember that the Lord Jesus had demonstrated his leadership by a humble servitude that girt itself with a towel and washed men’s feet. One of my elders told me once that he felt “used,” that I always “had an agenda” for him, and that he could never quite measure up. From that time, I thought of him as weak and lacking vision. Looking back I can see that he felt used because I was using him. As the Editor of the NATION observed, Mobutu Sese Seko was a “dictator ruling in the name of a people for whom he had scant respect.” (Nation, 09/09/97) Who did he respect? Who did he serve?

Was it his people, or himself? That is why I confessed to having a “Mobutu heart.” I was a lordship leader. People are tools—resources to be consumed to accomplish a vision. In the church, the self-centeredness of leaders can be disguised by worthy visions—evangelism, Christian education, church planting, or even “revival.”

Once I was invited to teach this SONSHIP course to the fourteen leaders of a congregation that had split. The “bad group” (as those who had stayed styled them) had left because they refused to support the vision of the “good group”—to “build a Basilica”—a gigantic stone church on the hill overlooking their rural Kenyan town. (Shades of Babel!) For the next six weeks we studied the Gospel and saw that the humility that comes from being clothed in Christ’s righteousness leads us to do everything for the glory of God. The group’s enthusiasm for our studies waned. I was not invited back. The church has since split again, a victim of the grandiose visions of a few leaders who are determined to make a name for, who? God, or themselves?

So, we have come “full circle.” In our first SONSHIP lesson, we talked about self-love and

its fruit, boasting. We have seen that the only cure for it is the Gospel—our continual surrender to the gift-righteousness of Jesus so that his righteousness replaces our fleshly thirst for glory and honor.

Today my ministry has a different objective. Yes, I still want to succeed, but success is defined differently. Success is being used of the Spirit to share the Gospel with unbelievers who need to be converted, and believers who, like me, need be restored to a saving and sanctifying union with Christ by faith every day. Success is measured in terms of people being enabled to live holy lives for the glory of God. (Ezek. 36:22ff) Too, I have learned that people under servant leaders and lordship leaders *feel differently* about their service to Christ. Under the one they feel *led*, under the other, *driven*. To a servant leader, *people* are most important; to a lordship leader, results are.

***Under a servant-leader,
people feel led, under a
lordship-leader, driven.***

Now when I hear someone boast that he has planted a church of seven hundred, rather than being automatically impressed, I think, “seven

hundred *what?*” Why question “success”? Why not just rejoice? Does it matter? Think about it: Does it matter whether the seven hundred physical bodies sitting on benches are there hungering for God, or as a testimony to the power of the preacher’s showmanship and persuasive advertising that appeals to the flesh? (“Free Prizes for All!”) Does it matter what the people *are*—whether they are seven hundred spiritual orphans, or seven hundred Pharisees, or, seven hundred humble, tender-hearted, God-loving, Christ-centered disciples who manifest the character of Jesus by the fruit of the Holy Spirit? It matters. It matters if the glory of God matters. Nothing less than humble, loving hearts bring him any glory at all. Great buildings filled by masses of people don’t always glorify God. Muslims, Mormons and Jehovah’s Witnesses pack large crowds into large buildings. The questions to ask are: *who are the people; what do they believe, and what brought them?* Do these needy people know the Gospel of Christ and are they being transformed by the Holy Spirit? Are husbands loving and faithful to their wives? Do wives love and respect their husbands? Are they parenting their children in the tender “nurture and admon-

tion of the Lord? Do children obey their parents? (Eph. 5:25-6:4) Are the business men and women loving their customers by dealing with them honestly? Is there a spirit of love, mutual esteem and service in the congregation? And, as for the leadership, does their ministry to these seven hundred lives effectively promote these worthy, God-glorifying goals? Or, is this a collection of seven hundred tiny boats that sail into the center of a huge lake once a week for a lecture and a song only to sail back to their homes, never really "touching."

Dr. Jack Miller, my first mentor in the Gospel, would refer to the Apostle Paul as a "weak-strongman." And Paul did more than talk about a life of brokenness, weakness and dependence on Christ. He modeled it. On one occasion, I was teaching SONSHIP as the "Field Ministry Training" course to the student body of one of the more prestigious seminaries in Africa. The lesson was on brokenness and servant leadership. Some few heads were nodding in agreement, but I sensed a coolness and resistance from many in the room. I called for questions or comments. One dear brother, a veteran of more than ten years of ministry, raised his hand. Nervous, and with trembling voice, he raised this objection:

"What you are telling us to do is American, not African!"

"But sir, what you are telling us to do is American, not African! Here, people expect us to be strong. If we do what you are saying, we will appear weak to them and they will not respect us. We will be rejected and lose our places."

Bless him, few leaders (including myself) have escaped that fear. After sharing that I had once shared those concerns, I explained that what God was calling us to do was not only radically un-African, but very un-American as well, and that every human being in every culture—especially our Evangelical Christian culture resisted such a call. Leaders are supposed to be perfect... "together" ... strong. His fear of appearing weak, of being rejected and of "losing his place" was telling. But if we really do fear those things, we had better chose the path of weakness! Why? Because to have success in the Kingdom of God, you turn the world upside. To be rich you become poor. To have joy, you mourn over your sins.

To inherit the earth, you become meek. In God's Kingdom, the way up is down. So, the deeper question is, what is the real goal of our ministry? Is it to be powerful, to gain personal respect and keep a firm grip on our positions of authority? It happens.

In September 1997, within days of one another, three prominent leaders died: Mother Teresa, Princess Diana, and Mobutu Sese Seko. The death of the Princess set the world to mourning. The news of Mother Teresa's death sent hundreds of thousands of Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims pouring into the streets of India's major cities, sorrowing. Not a tear fell in Kinshasa—a reminder that when we "save our lives" and lord our authority over men, we will be feared, but never loved. My purpose is not to suggest that we become selfless servants in order to gain honor, but to do it for the Glory of God and the sake of the Gospel. If there is a reward at the end, then praise God, but the real prize is Christ himself.

Mobutu's life and death are one long, loud sermon with one clear message: *self-love destroys everything.* Such rulers may appear to flourish for awhile, but their success is only an

illusion. In the end, the "Mobutus" of this world (whether earthly rulers or Christians who imitate their style) lose everything (1 Cor. 3:11-15). We finished our seminary class that day by carefully reading over and discussing the passages that follow here.

1. JOHN 13:2-17

The evening meal was being served, and the devil had already prompted Judas Iscariot, son of Simon, to betray Jesus. 3 Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God; 4 *so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist.* 5 *After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him.* 6 He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?" 7 Jesus replied, "You do not realize now what I am doing, but later you will understand." 8 "No," said Peter, "you shall never wash my feet." Jesus answered, "Unless I wash you, you have

no part with me." 9 "Then, Lord," Simon Peter replied, "not just my feet but my hands and my head as well!" 10 Jesus answered, "A person who has had a bath needs only to wash his feet; his whole body is clean. And you are clean, though not every one of you." 11 For he knew who was going to betray him, and that was why he said not every one was clean. 12 When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place.

"Do you understand what I have done for you?" he asked them. 13 "You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and rightly so, for that is what I am. 14 Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. 15 I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. 16 I tell you the truth, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. 17 Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them."

THINK IT THROUGH: What might this mean in the context of your life and ministry—in your home with your spouse and children, in your extended family, in your neighborhood, in your church? *It frightens me!* And, it reminds me: "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. 25 For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will find it." (Matt. 16:24,25; Luke 9:23)

2. PHILIPPIANS 2:1-9

If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if (you have) any comfort from his love, if (you have) any fellowship with the Spirit, if (you have) any tenderness and compassion, 2 then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose. 3 Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. 4 Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.

5 Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: 6 Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, 7 but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant,

being made in human likeness. 8 And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross!

THINK IT THROUGH: Jesus "*made himself nothing*" to deliver us from our need to "be somebody." To redeem us, he had to lay aside his power and glory. He took on the form of a servant in the Greek—a bond slave. (*δοῦλος*) not (*διδάκονος*) "servant, or deacon." This is the role to which we are called in the Kingdom—a servant role. Our flesh will always rebel against this. It will call us to assume the role of lords rather than servants; to wield power rather than empower others; to hold tightly onto control rather than doing everything in our power to make ourselves unnecessary. If we do not consciously and daily clothe our minds in Christ Jesus, we will never have the power to resist the constant tug of our flesh to beautify ourselves spiritually, and rely on our own strength for ministry.

**Jesus made himself
nothing to deliver us
from our need to
"be somebody."**

3. MATTHEW 20:24-28

(James and John had jockeyed for the key leadership positions.) *When the ten heard about this, they were indignant with the two brothers. 25 Jesus called them together and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. 26 Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, 27 and whoever wants to be first must be your slave—28 just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."*

THINK IT THROUGH: *Do you want to be a "great" servant in the Kingdom?* Then become the servant of all! (Here, the words change from *διδάκονος* in vs. 26 to *δοῦλος* in vs. 28.)

4. 2 CORINTHIANS 12:1-10

I will not boast about myself, except about my weaknesses. 6 Even if I should choose to boast, I would not be a fool, because I would be speaking the truth. But I refrain, so no one will think more of me than is warranted by what I do or say. 7 To keep me from becoming conceited because of these surpassingly great revelations, there was given me a thorn

In my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me. 8 Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. 9 But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. 10 That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

THINK IT THROUGH: I don't know about you, but even with all I know about the Gospel being for the glory of God, and with all I know about Jesus righteousness being more than sufficient to "make me beautiful," when I accomplish something I think is of note for God, the urge to boast about it wells up inside me!

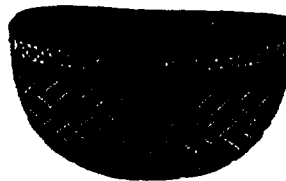
The truth is that although we know very well that the concept of humility and brokenness is Biblical, deep down in our hearts we resist it. God says that we are just "earthen vessels" for the Gospel, but we spend a lot of time and energy trying to "improve our pot"—etching the fine designs of our sermons in it, painting it with our works of hospitality, inlaying it with the beads of our visitation, and encrusting it with the cowry shells of our evangelism. Then, when we feel sufficiently "beautified," we present this fine pot to others and suggest (or even demand) that they admire it, and due to its beauty, yield up power and control over the church to us. (Perhaps you have no past history of, or a tendency toward this sort of sinful behavior, but I do. And, even if you don't, read along—on the outside chance that the Holy Spirit *might* want to show you something about yourself as well.)

II. DIGGING UP THE ROOTS OF OUR RESISTANCE TO BROKENNESS

Here's a hard question that comes out of a horrifying vision I had of my own soul: "Could it be that what is really behind all our protesting about a ministry of brokenness . . . of being "African" or "American" or necessary, is a desperate need to try to protect the reputations we've earned (or hope to earn) as "Big Men?" Now don't get huffy. It's only a question.

Oh, we may have more legitimate fears— that sinful people might take advantage of any display of weakness on our part and thereby sin against God *and* us. But Jesus endured that, and warned us that "A servant is not greater than his Lord; if they persecuted me, they will persecute you . . ." (Jn. 15:20) Is doing everything we can to avoid persecution the correct way to shoulder the cross of Christ? We can carry luggage and we can carry crosses, but, as someone pointed out, crosses, (unlike luggage) have no handles. They were designed for dying on.

But what about in the case of requests for aid? If we say "yes" to every request for help from others, we'll soon be destitute! True, but remember, Jesus himself did not meet every need. Remember, we are *servants of God for his sake*, not servants of people for their own sake. That means that we may need to say "no" sometimes to protect people from sinning against God, themselves and us.



Incised Clay Bowl - Gold Coast
Fig. 16-3

The greater danger, however, is that our reasons may evolve into excuses. For too many years I hid behind the "reasons" of self-preservation, but they were just excuses for not living and ministering as a broken man. No wonder I fell into the sin of *using* the Gospel ministry to clothe myself

with personal power and respectability. The result was that my passion for the glory of God died and was replaced by a frantic quest to be right and look good. I didn't want to be viewed as a simple "earthen vessel"—an unadorned clay pot. My failure to understand that the righteousness of Christ was sufficient to clothe me left me with the need to decorate myself with ministerial success. I had to create my own value—a value in excess of the treasure of the Gospel within me.

From 1964 when I took my first church as a student-supply (while in college) until SONSHIP Week 1990, I was blind to the fact that for all those years my inner motives for ministry were terribly flawed. My spiritual integrity, my family and the ministry of the glorious Gospel of Jesus were compromised. Perhaps you have realized by now that I am one of the world's foremost authorities on how to do the Gospel ministry wrong! I know what that self-glorifying style of life looks, feels, talks, and acts like. I know its bitter fruits.

~~TH I WANT TO MINIST~~ **I do want to make every effort to be for you what Dr. Jack Miller was for me back in 1990. He was a man who had seen his self-glorying and was repenting of it. He dared to challenge me (as he did hundreds of other American pastors) to look honestly at our hearts, and then run to Christ with what we saw. That is all I am doing—calling you to examine your heart, motives, style of ministry, and the way you relate to and lead people. Then, compare what you see with what Jesus and Paul taught and lived.**

Are you a broken man? Are you ministering to others from the platform of your own strength, your own education, your own personality, or, are you "becoming nothing," as Jesus did? Could it be that you have fallen as I fell? So many of my dear African brothers have repented in tears of the same thing! Wonderfully, after they let the Holy Spirit have his way in freeing them from this sin, their ministries have become incredibly powerful for Christ!

***People see Christ, not them!
People follow Christ, not them!
People glorify Christ, not them.***

I think that the seminary student I mentioned before became angry at me because he was afraid. God was challenging one of his most cherished assumptions about the ministry—that respect and prestige are your rights when you are a pastor. But I was challenging him to die—to be "crucified with Christ." He made it clear that he was not ready for that, at least not in the way I had suggested. The Scriptures won the argument that day, but I didn't win his heart. I never did. He kept sitting in my classes (he had to), but it was obvious from his manner that I had become an enemy. Could it be that the deeper reasons he was studying for the ministry were flawed? Did he want to rule instead of lead, direct instead of serve? I don't know, but it happens. **I have lived under men like that. I have been a man like that. May God help us. May God forgive us. May God change us.**

Yes, the "why question" of motive is painful to ask, why not ask it? If we truly seek the glory of God above all else, what is there to fear? If we pass the test, we can rejoice; if we

~~TH H. WE WANT TO KNOW~~ **no surprise to God!) Will you join me in asking that question now—and keep asking it often? Ask it of yourself; ask it of the Father. He loves you. Talk it over with him. Pray David's prayer, the one we have held up as a model of spiritual integrity since our first SONSHIP lesson:**

"Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my thoughts. See if there is any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."

— Psalm 139:23,24

III. CHARACTERISTICS OF A MINISTRY OF BROKENNESS: HOW DOES IT LOOK AND FEEL?

It looks like power, but feels like weakness. We have considered how brokenness comes to the heart and how it touches our relationships in a number of areas. Now we will focus on how the broken heart operates in the life of the church by looking briefly at four ministry areas:

- A. Preaching and Teaching**
- B. Pastoral Counseling**
- C. Leadership of Others**
- D. Evangelism of the Lost**

A. BROKENNESS IN OUR PREACHING AND TEACHING MINISTRY

How does brokenness look?

~~1. We preach Christ, not ourselves. 2. We preach the Gospel, not the Law. 3. We become self-forgetful instead of self-conscious. 4. We lose our need to win, and win a need to lose.~~
1. We preach Christ, not ourselves. 2. We preach the Gospel, not the Law. 3. We become self-forgetful instead of self-conscious. 4. We lose our need to win, and win a need to lose.

1. We Preach Christ, Not Ourselves

"For we do not preach ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. For God, who said, 'Let light shine out of darkness,' made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ. But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us. — II Cor. 4:5-7

What has Paul said? Let's try to paraphrase his key points: a. We do not preach ourselves, so stop looking at us! We aren't the Good News,

I have lived under men like that. I have been a man like that. God forgive us!

Jesus is! b. On the contrary, we are your servants (Greek, "slaves") for Jesus' sake. We want no honor. c. God caused his light to shine in us so that we can all see his saving love for us in Jesus' face. (All is of grace; we have no light in and of ourselves.) d. On purpose, God chose lowly clay pots like us (rather than gold or silver vessels) to hold the precious treasure of the Gospel. The reason he did this was so that we wouldn't distract from or compete with his power and glory, and all you see is him; all you see is God."

That leads us to a rather obvious question: *"Is this the impression I want people to have of me—that I am just a clay pot?"*

The Repenting Professor

In 1997 during a chapel service at the Nairobi International School of Theology, one of the faculty was speaking to us about pride and humility. He noted that spiritual pride was a particular danger for people in ministry, and quoted what a number of well-known authors had said on the subject of spiritual pride. (Pride-sniffer that I am, I thought I noted an air of spiritual pride in his preaching.) As he neared the end of that point, he suddenly stopped and confessed, "As a matter of fact, as I was reading these quotations on spiritual pride, the thought began to grow in my mind: *"I wonder if all these people are suitably impressed by the depth of my research."* That public confession gave his message—and the rest of the chapel service—a different character. I felt something inside me relax and open up to what God might say to me through him. I sensed that he was not out to impress me or manipulate me for his own ends. His confession *authenticated* his ministry to our souls with an actual (and unplanned) demonstration of the power of spiritual pride and the convicting work of the Holy Spirit. Even the hymn at the close of the service took on a new freshness and power. The Gospel was for sinners—proud sinners like him and like us. Am I suggesting that we must repent of something every time we preach or teach? Not necessarily, but if we do, our *"do this's"* and *"don't do that's"* will be a lot more palatable! Besides, one quick look at my own heart will usually show me something I can repent of. In fact, we are such needy people that pride can creep into and capture our hearts while we are preaching against it!



Fig. 16-4

Public confession in teaching is a way of telling your hearers, "I am not preaching at you;" "I am not preaching myself;" I am preaching Christ"—unless, of course, as Jonathan Edwards warns, we become proud of our repentances and deliver them with "Pharisaical affectation." (1746, 243) Public confession has the effect of "making it safe for the rest of the sinners in the room to examine their own hearts. Paul instructed Timothy to *"Proclaim the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage, with great patience and careful instruction."* (2 Tim. 4:2) That correction, rebuke, encouragement, and careful instruction are among the necessary elements of good preaching and teaching is obvious. But does that rule out including ourselves in the correction, rebuke, etc.? I don't think so. And, Paul interjected another characteristic that should govern all the other elements—"with great patience." How can we be patient with sinners? By remembering what the Gospel says about us! What does it say? That Jesus died for sinners, for me, the Chief of Sinners! Bless Paul. He was powerful in the Gospel because he kept preaching it to himself. We too will be powerful in the Gospel if we preach it to ourselves. Harsh

preaching is a common feature in many of our churches in Africa. Preachers shout harsh accusations—as if they were above sin and had already been made perfect. Why? Many of my students have confessed (along with me) that it is because their eyes have been fixed on their own legalistic righteousness. But we can be delivered from that when we keep our eyes fixed on Jesus, that is, when we stay conscious that he is our Great High Priest who is seated at the right hand of the Father clothing us in his perfect righteousness (Heb. 12:3; 7:25; Rom. 8:34) It is very hard for me to be carried away with spiritual pride when I keep that vision before me. It humbles me. It enables me to see my sin and to preach to others "with great patience." If we look to Christ the way Paul looked at Christ, we can be patient with sinners and become broken preachers of the glorious Gospel. Let's stop preaching ourselves..."

2. We preach the Gospel, not the Law. Am I suggesting that it is wrong to preach the law? No, of course not! The law is God's law, and he intends for us to keep it—all "three levels"

of it. What I am saying is that we must not preach it as a means of salvation or sanctification. We are ministers of the New Covenant not the Old. We are supposed to be heralds of Christ who stand on Mt. Calvary pouring out the news of grace—not disciples of Moses who stand on Mt. Sinai belching out the hot lava of law. "BUT," you protest, "MY PEOPLE ARE A DISOBEDIENT LOT!" Yes, and you are a disobedient teacher. I am too. And, remember this: It was in the very shadow of Mt. Sinai, while the mountain was quaking and sending out fire, that the people made and worshipped the Golden Calf. Yes, but then the law came down! Yes it did, but it did not change them, and they died in the wilderness. The law has not changed you or your people either, has it? It was never meant to. The law shows us our dis-

ease; it can't cure it. It is a signpost pointing to loving obedience, but it cannot take us to our destination. So use the law for its intended purpose. Here is some advice on how.

Have you ever had surgery? If so, what did the doctor do before cutting you with the knife? Right, he used an anesthetic. If he had suggested that you go it alone, what would you have done? Run? Amen! Dr. Richard Lovelace has noted that parents, teachers and preachers often lose patience with sinners and try to cut away their sin with the sharp scalpel of the law—without anesthetic! So he writes,

"The anesthetic of grace is constantly needed in the healing process of sanctification along with the surgical ministry of the law. For this reason, many areas of the church which contain a great deal of thunder and lightning, exposing at least the surfaces of sin, are full of desperately anxious and bitterly contentious people. Law without grace provokes sin and exposes and aggravates it into some of its ugliest expressions. The counselor (or parent or pastor) who is attempting to move people further in sanctification should therefore begin with a strong emphasis on justification and reiterate this often in the course of his work.

So I find this law at work: When I want to do good, evil is right there with me. For in my inner being I delight in God's law; but I see another law at work in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within my members. What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? Thanks be to God—through Jesus Christ our Lord! – Romans 7:21–25

Psychoanalysts speak of the "resistance" patients have toward the discovery of traumatic material hidden in the unconscious. The same automatic fear will grip and blind Christian believers unless they are very deeply assured that they are "accepted in the beloved," received by God as if they were perfectly righteous because their guilt is canceled by the righteousness of Christ laid to their account. The human conscience is very deeply disoriented in its conviction that

we must have works and sanctification to recommend ourselves to God. We must carry out a very deliberate replacement of this misunderstanding with the awareness that God simply wants honesty, openness and a trusting reliance on Christ our Savior. We cannot bear the light on our needs unless we are also in

the light concerning God's grace to meet those needs." – Dynamics of Spiritual Life, p. 115

Will the law change us without the Gospel?

Of course it will—into defensive, less-repentant sinners! Hardness of heart (or discouragement) is the inevitable fruit of a diet of law without the Gospel. But Paul says that he "delights in the law in his inner man!" (Rom. 7:22) Yes he does, but then he admits that the law does not change him, that he still fights a war that is winnable only in the Gospel! (see text box) Before we leave this subject...

Have you witnessed this Sunday morning

drama? The preachers mount their pulpits and begin preaching at top volume, reproving, rebuking and correcting (with anger, not patience), but the people sit there with a blank stare, their eyes glazed over, hearing nothing. I have observed this many times, and recognize it as a psychological defense mechanism against pain. They have "changed the station" because they cannot tolerate the constant verbal assaults of preaching which condemns them but never bathes their hearts in the tender love of God for them in the Gospel. Please understand: This is not a plea to stop preaching the law, but a plea to

stop preaching it as a substitute for the Gospel. Preach the law in its fullness—perfect love for God and one's neighbor. Show people what that kind of love looks like. Preach the "three levels of the law" from lesson four in SONSHIP. Then, take the wounded souls (together with your repenting self) to the mercy seat of Christ for cleansing and the empowering of the Holy Spirit whose fruit is love—full obedience to the whole law with the whole heart.

3. We become self-forgetful not self-conscious

The Story of the Stumbling Student

When Jack Miller was professor of Practical Theology at Westminster Seminary, a student sought him out for counsel. It seems that each time the student preached, he was nearly paralyzed by self-consciousness and fear. Jack asked the young man when the fear would begin, and how he had tried to overcome it. The student said that the fear would grip him when he looked out at the faces in the congregation—just before he stood up to preach, and that he had tried bowing his head and praying. Jack, sensing the need for a direct challenge softened by humor, gave him this advice: "Well, I have never found that praying to my own navel was much

help, so try this: before you rise to preach, look at the faces in the congregation, and remember God's promise: 'For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believes in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.' Then, stand up and encourage them with the love of God for them in the Gospel.'

The student approached Jack the next week so full of joy he could hardly contain it! Why? The whole focus of his preaching ministry had changed from trying to be right and look good, to loving people and making Jesus look good!

4. We lose our need to win, and win a need to lose.

Paul rejoiced that he had come to count all things as "loss" for the excellency of knowing Christ Jesus his Lord, and being found in his righteousness—a righteousness that was his apart from the law, apart from his doing, apart from his earning. (Phil. 3:7-9) From all accounts, Saul must have come from an influential family. He was from Tarsus, a city on the

northern Mediterranean coast, and a Roman citizen by birth. We could surmise that his father was a wealthy merchant who sent his son to Jerusalem to study in the best schools under the most respected teachers of the Law like Gamaliel.

But whatever the details of his pedigree, Saul rose to prominence in the party of the Pharisees, a group who were consumed with the need to look good, the need to be right, and the need to protect themselves and their position—the need to win. People bent on winning can be dangerous and terribly unloving. Truth and personality can become so wedded together that one loses the ability to discern where truth leaves off and self begins. The truth is "owned" in an unhealthy way, and so the ability to discuss doctrine rationally, even the ability to think, is lost. Starting and winning doctrinal controversies can become like a disease in a sick soul that uses "rightness" as an alien form of righteousness to mask its own failure to keep the Royal Law of love. I know, I have seen it, and more to the point, I have done it. There was a long

time in my life that I was nothing more than a "guardian of the truth." I didn't know how to shine the burning light of my own doctrinal acuity on myself to expose the pride and self

deception that were eating away at my own soul and destroying my relationship with God and others.

Phil Yancey and Tim Stafford co-authored the book, *Unhappy Secrets of the Christian Life*, a play on the title of Hannah Whitehall Smith's *The Christian's Secret of a Happy Life*. They tell us about "the dark side" of Christian living. One chapter, "The Killer Instinct," opens with a quote from Bob Cousy, one of professional basketball's all-time greats. Cousy's autobiography, *The Killer Instinct*, chronicles the disturbing effects of competitive sports on his mind. At times, it nearly drove him insane. "What is both curious and frightening," he says, "is that the more you win, the more you need to win." (1979, 31) *Unhappy Secrets* notes that competition is a normal part of life, but that it can be dangerous. Yancey writes that from the time he entered secondary school, he could see that there were only two types of people there, "the Winners and the Losers." He determined to be a winner—to find his best way to success and exploit it. The key to

What is both curious and frightening is that the more you win, the more you need to win.

winning, he said, was to find a niche and climb, often using other people as ladder rungs. Phil joined "the Winners" by his victory in the race for Student Body President through a campaign of lies, intimidation and inflammatory rhetoric which crushed his opponent, politically and emotionally. (1979, 33-5)

What about us? What about Christian leaders here in Africa? What about this "I'm hot, you're not" style of leadership we see around our continent, this "Mobutuism," this must win by climbing over others that my students tell me has crept into the very heart and fabric of the church's life?

The Gospel ministry is not about winning anything for ourselves, not power, not praise, not prestige. The ministry is about dying, about losing everything we once held onto for righteousness, everything we once depended on to "make us somebody." It is about enthroning Christ in our hearts as Lord, and loving him with all of our hearts as we keep our eyes fixed on him as he continually intercedes for us before the Father. It is about drawing people into that same vision so that their gaze is never fixed on us, but on him.

Join me. Let's examine our hearts and "keep them with all diligence" lest they harbor this "killer instinct," this need to be right, to be first, to get ahead that will tear our hearts away from simple trust in the righteousness of Jesus and spoil our ability to bring God the glory and honor he wants from our lives.

B. BROKENNESS AND OUR MINISTRY OF COUNSELING OTHERS

Far from being a "mini-course" on the subject, the following comments emphasize *just one facet* of your counseling ministry—the impact of the way in which you present yourself to others on your counseling technique and content.

1. A call to "holy un-professionalism"

Pastors can counsel with great competence and much fruit, without being professionally trained—or trying to appear "professional." If you agree, consider this a call to a very un-professional looking ministry—that of

being a "wounded healer," a sinner among sinners. Why shouldn't your counseling ministry bear the same marks of brokenness as your teaching and preaching ministry? The curative message—the Gospel—is the same; the greatest difference is the level of intimacy in the one-on-one, or one-on-two, or more, as when working with an entire family (Miller 1980, 108).

Oh, there is great comfort in remaining behind one's office desk, but a desk, like a pulpit, can be something to hide behind, to

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hide one's real self behind—the part of you that hurts and is hurt just like those who sit in front of it looking for help. I have spent many hours hiding behind a desk—even physically I have come out from behind it to counsel my flock. I am learning, however, that there is great power in sitting down, face-to-

face with a wounded sinner and admitting that you too struggle with sin, just as he or she does. Paul did. (Rom. 7) Perhaps you don't share the same temptations, but you certainly share the same root sins. So, why shouldn't we present ourselves as we really are—not Arrived Ones, but people who have felt the sting of sin and the law, but who know the power of the Gospel to change us? Two reasons are often given why we should not counsel like this. One is a valid caution, the other is rooted in the very sin under discussion! Here they are.

a. Be careful not to embarrass others

It is possible to embarrass others with our confessions of weakness (public or private), so we must show our vulnerability in wise, healthy, full-of-faith ways that will draw people out, not send them into hiding.

b. "But, I want to be respected!"

Ah... there's the chief reason "not to." We might "lose respect" by being open with others. Yes, that *might* happen! Some people—especially those who are consumed with a sense of their own righteousness—might look for an excuse to accuse us. But two things balance that out: 1) the desperate need of the majority to sit down and talk about their problems with another "real sinner," and 2) the fact that we don't deserve respect! I don't; do you? What if people knew the real you, the

real me? Meaning? Suppose we had a diary in which we had recorded our most secret thoughts for every day of the year, and upon arriving home from worship one day, discovered that we had left it on a chair at church? Or, suppose we were counseling someone (or worse, preaching) and on the wall of the room, there appeared a huge video playback of our secret thoughts for the past week? You get the point. God says, "As a man thinks in his heart, so is he." (Prov. 23:7) We Christians play a lot of games with one another, don't we? Why? Isn't it because we have forgotten that at the right hand of the Father, we have a Savior who is making us beautiful, so now we think that job is up to us? It is a debilitating game that can destroy our integrity as counselors.

2. The value of knowing your own heart (You can distinguish the technicolor fruit from the deadly root.)

One of the great bonuses that grows out of a healthy vision of, and openness about, your sinful heart is that having "come out of hiding," you are free to lead others to discover the truth about their hearts. I can remember the fear that would grip me in days past when men would come to me (their pastor) for counsel about a problem with lust or pornography. Since these were my hidden sins, I couldn't help myself—much less them. But, I had a reputation to protect as a "holy man" and wise advisor. Surely such a man doesn't struggle with those things and must have the answers for overcoming such sins. So, I was full of advice about how to "flee youthful lusts," and how these unfortunate souls should keep records of when they were particularly vulnerable to temptation (which matched mine precisely), etc. But I was a full-fledged "orphan." I was not drinking from the bottomless well of the love of God for me in the Gospel, so I couldn't lead them to drink those powerfully sanctifying waters either. All I could do was hand out the law—"Stop doing it!"—or clever variations thereof. But we already knew we were breaking it. Conviction wasn't the problem; the will to repent was, and none of us could keep the law. (The sin was too pleasurable. Review S-5.)

Now, as a "wounded healer," a broken, self-confessed sinner, I can differentiate the embarrassing "technicolor" fruits of sin from the deadly roots that feed them. (And I have

the key, faith, to combat my sins.) Slashing bad fruit off a tree doesn't change the nature of the tree. You must kill lust at the root level, not the fruit level. Lust in men is a fruit fed by the root of loneliness, self-love and an unwillingness to love and serve women either as sisters in Christ—or as lost ones who need him. Lust uses people, sees them as objects for self-gratification. The law says "love them," but lust says, "use them." Lust can't love. So, where can we get love—supernatural love—except from the Holy Spirit who's fruit is love? And how do we get the Spirit? By faith in Christ. (Gal. 3:1-5) Trying to stop lusting is an impossible task because we are addicted to using others. The wise counselor will point the lusting male away from himself for a cure. He will show him how the exercise of weak, child-like Gospel faith will take him into the conscious presence of Christ where he will be blessed by Spirit with both the desire and the power to love others—yes, even his former "mental mistresses." The same applies for theft (using others for your gain rather than sharing with them what you have), or any

other sin. Gospel faith is the key to sanctification, and therefore the chief tool of the Christian counselor.

SIN is complicated; GRACE is simple—not easy—simple.

3. Sin is complicated: grace is simple—most of the time.

Are we suggesting that overcoming sin is easy? Hardly! Grace is costly, and the faith by which we lay hold of grace is not easy. It is simple, but not easy.

The people who come to you for help will be smarting from a complex tangle of self-inflicted wounds caused by their own sins of self-love, self-righteousness and the myriad sins that spring from them. They will need the courage to see the roots of those sins so that they do not waste time and grow discouraged treating the surface symptoms.

Others will come to you bleeding emotionally from trivial hurts or deep wounds inflicted on them by others. In either case, they will need to be able to shed the role of victim (victims don't need a Savior, only sinners do.) so that they can rest in the healing embrace of Christ's forgiving love for them. In that embrace, they will find the power to give that forgiveness away to others. The Gospel is the "Swiss Army Knife" of the counselor, with a blade for nearly every ill. Nearly?

Yes, you will have people that Gospel faith will not touch in this way because

physical diseases (such as brain tumor) or problems with brain chemistry (from physical causes or even unrepented of sin) has rendered them incapable of rational thought, not to mention, intelligent faith. In such cases, we should pray for God's healing intervention, and, if there is no immediate response (as in most cases), seek medical treatment *in addition to our ongoing prayer.*¹

Most often, however, we will be dealing with plain, old-fashioned sin, and here, God the Holy Spirit can employ you as his "Junior Partner" to lead your counselees to see how faith in Christ can cleanse them from the guilt and power of sin. Yes, things get messy, very messy at times, but the Gospel speaks clearly and powerfully into our "messes" and the stresses that afflict our relationship to God, our marriages, our parenting (or singleness), and our relationships with neighbors—friends and enemies, believers and unbelievers. We are not suggesting that obedience is easy, only that it is more than just possible as our counselees exercise a hearty faith in Christ.

4. Counsel yourself as you counsel others.

I have seen the Holy Spirit do powerful things in counselees when, in the midst of trying to help them, I have needed help myself. One morning my wife Becky and I had a huge argument and had said some very cruel things to one another. (We call these "Flesh Monster Outbreaks.") At 4:30 that afternoon, I had scheduled a counseling appointment in my office at the church with a young, newly married couple who had a problem—a stormy relationship. They argued with one another constantly! They sat down in the office with faked smiles, and then poured out their struggle. And there I sat, surrounded by the symbols of my divine office (American style), a thickly carpeted, cherry-paneled room walled with an impressive array of theo-

¹ God gave us the wisdom to discover medicines, and often uses them as *his means to* (not substitutes for) answer our prayers for healing. It is a suspect theology that calls it "faith" to reject Paul's prescription to Timothy in favor for "prayer for healing." Paul had the power to raise the dead, but chose to recommend a physical means instead. (1 Tim. 5:23)

logical books. Believe it: I looked competent to counsel.

But this was after my 1990 renewal, and I knew I was being confronted with a choice. Would I act the part of Mr. Perfect with all the answers (the way I used to), or, would I be the sinner I *really* was and "come clean" with the story of that early morning argument with Becky? God was gracious (perhaps I feared the handwriting on the wall?) and I used a blow-by-blow analysis of my argument with Becky to show how my pride and defensiveness had set my cruel tongue in motion in an attempt to "do damage" to the enemy of my pretences to perfection—my wife. It was a powerful moment. It was as if I had held up a mirror in front of their faces. In my sin they

saw their sin. In my readiness to admit my sin, they found the courage to admit theirs. But most importantly, as I was ready to lay hold of Jesus' gift-righteousness by faith and trust it as a sufficient cleansing for and covering of my sin, they found the faith to

do the same. And, they saw that if I had laid hold of that same righteousness of Jesus that morning when my "rightness" had been threatened, my anger would have subsided, and the argument would not have happened. It showed how a failure of love is really a failure of faith. Was that embarrassing for me? Yes, but more to the point, it was the truth about me. So, we repented together, and prayed for one another, that we would learn the same lesson—that simple faith in Jesus transforms fighters into lovers. I went home and repented to Becky. *She liked it.*

That was one of the most powerful counseling sessions of my ministry, and look who got helped! Please listen. Your vulnerability in the counseling room will not lose you respect or cost you friends. On the contrary, it will earn you respect and win you friends! More importantly, when you are willing to shed your pretenses to piety and become a fellow sinner, you will become a much more effective counselor. No, you don't "get down into the ditch" and drown with people. You help them up out of the ditch by leading them to put their weak tiny hands to the big strong hands of Christ. And, you do that best by doing the same—right in their presence.

5. Your private counseling and your public vulnerability are integrally related.

I am getting more and more opportunities to teach in Bible colleges, theological seminaries and to teach missionary teams around the continent. Everywhere I go I repent. I do that because I really am a sinner, and I want people to know that I know I am. The Gospel is for sinners—sinners only. I need it as much as they need it. One of the things I usually mention when I talk to men is the problem I mentioned previously, lust. Why? Because men lust. All of them struggle with it. For some it is controlled, but others are miserable because they are in secret bondage to it, or some acting out of it. I cannot remember sharing this even one time that at least one student has not approached me for help afterwards, either immediately or Nicodemus-like, later. I have learned not to leave a campus too quickly! It has happened so often, I can spot the men coming; I don't need "a word of knowledge!" As they stammer and stutter, I shared one or two points from my testimony again—including the lust part. It is then they interrupt, "Well...actually... that is what I wanted to talk to you about."

Why do I belabor this? Because I want you to enter into a more effective ministry of liberation for people who are in agony over their sins! Many live with terrible secrets that haunt them and cripple their lives—every day. But our legalistic Evangelical culture has created a toxic environment for sinners! It is not safe to repent because it is not safe to admit to weakness! So what are we left with? A Gospel for the righteous—or more precisely, for those who can successfully pretend to be. I challenge you to be a "wounded healer." Yes, it will cost you! It will cost you your reputation as Mr. or Mrs. or MS Spotless. It will cost you your reputation as a sinless, pure, perfect, prudish... bore. Give it up. Paul did. Luther did. Join Luther's "Big Sinners Club." (S-1, p. 15) It will help you help people—and, *it is fun!*

C. BROKENNESS IN YOUR STYLE OF LEADERSHIP WITH YOUR CONGREGATION AND ITS LEADERS (ELDERS, DEACONS, ETC.)

We plan to major on the specifics of pastoral leadership in a future training module, *Growing Your Church by Grace*, but for now, here are a few words of advice from one who is an expert

in doing it wrong, but is taking his first baby-steps as a "servant-leader."

1. The right to lead must be earned.

The right to lead others in Christ's church must be earned. Whatever role you name, pastor, church board member, committee chairman, ministry team leader, classroom teacher—the *moral authority* to lead is not gained by hierarchical appointment, or academic degrees, or many years of experience (you can do it wrong for long), or even by being formally elected by the people you will lead! The right to lead comes after all those things, and will be earned as we are knighted by the King to wear the towel and carry the basin of a Savior who washed his disciples' feet. We have known many angry, hurt and frustrated men and women who have labored under the (common) assumption that leadership was somehow their right. It

never is. Think of Britain. Think of the way *the hearts of the British people* have responded to Prince Charles—the rightful heir—and the late Princess Dianna, "just" his wife. You get the point, and we will reinforce it with a look at Nelson Mandela as we conclude. We may get the post, and be able to keep the troops outwardly submissive by protocol, law, or force, but not

as Christian leaders. To earn the right to lead hearts (not just bodies) we must love the people who own the hearts. Otherwise, as Jack Miller says, we will "very likely come across to people as a lord . . ." (1997, 85) Yes, sinners are hard to love. God loves us, and, the Holy Spirit will give us the ability to love as we "keep ourselves in the love of God." (1 Jn. 5:21)

Engrave it on your eyes: the people "under" you will love and follow your leadership as they see you loving them like Christ loves them. In God's Kingdom, it's the only way to lead. It gets what God wants: *passion*, not mere compliance.

2. How to lead so that your people will feel loved and Christ will be magnified

The following is an informal "stream of consciousness list" compiled at the computer by my wife and I from our observations of the way our the International Director of World Harvest Mission, leads us. We are directly accountable to Christ for our ministry, but he is the man who pastors us, and the one to whom we report. His leadership is not only beneficial and satis-



**The Gospel:
For Sinners Only!**

tying to us. It provides me as a Team Leader with a model of leadership I want to follow when the first new couple joins our Nairobi Renewal Team later this year. Here is the model, and as you read it, think of how it applies (in whole or in part) to your role as a pastor, elder, deacon, committee chairperson or member, teacher, parishioner, parent, or discipler of others.

A MODEL OF SERVANT-LEADERSHIP

- **Remember that your vision must be a shared vision—not your vision alone. Lead from the bottom up, not the top down; ask people for their opinions; listen to their answers. Ask them for specific and measurable goals for their work and ministry and hold them accountable for the realization of those goals. But do this as their partner and cheerleader, as one who offers a helping hand and gives words of encouragement, as one who is on their side—not as a policeman with a raised baton.**

- **Show that you value their work for Christ and thank them for their kindnesses to you; ask them about their personal hopes and dreams, needs, fears and problems, and pray with (and for) them about those; share your dreams, needs and problems with them, and solicit prayer for them.**

- **Initiate dialogue when there is controversy; be a peacemaker, but don't shy away from the difficult issues by ignoring them or by offering easy answers.**

- **Empathize with, don't minimize, their struggles and the difficult circumstances they face in their work. Be as ready with the sympathetic ear as you are with the word of advice or correction.**

- **Meet with your key leaders one-on-one (or, as a couple) every three or four months. Take them for a simple lunch; ask them diagnostic questions about their spiritual condition and the health of the relationships in their family and at work; probe; be lovingly bold to confront them about the "blind spots" you see in their lives or inconsistencies in their spiritual walk and talk; call them to repentance.**

- **Ask them to help you see your blind spots, and to call you to repentance.**

- **Ask them to evaluate your ministry to them, and specifically ask how you can improve to lead them better.**

This may seem like a lot of trouble. It is. To provide true leadership costs the leader. Leaders don't shout, "Go there!" They take you by the hand and say, "Let's go there." It is much easier to "pin on the badge" and push your authority on others than to wear the crown of Biblical leadership—the crown of thorns. Leadership like this is so rare that few of us have ever experienced it. You may be wondering, how does it feel to be led like that? My first reaction is to say, "It's very scary"

because it is not just a paper relationship. It is a no-nonsense, two-way, sinner-to-sinner walk that faces the tough realities of real life. But most of all, it feels like... love.

**So, you aspire to Christian leadership?
Good. Welcome to the R.O.B.T.—
The Royal Order of the
Basil and Towel.
— John 13:2-17 —**

3. Can the Holy Spirit penetrate a culture of toughness with the spirit of servant-leadership?

Good question. Think about this: In your home country, which tribe or class of people do you think would be the *least likely* to respond well to a ministry of brokenness—much less to the suggestion that they live lives of humble, servant-leadership?

In December 1997 I was invited to teach a District-level seminar to the officials, pastors and elders of a large denomination in Kenya—in Maasailand. The official who issued the invitation lamented that there had been considerable unrest among local church leaders, that they tended to resist authority and compete with one another for power. The Maasai are among the most feared and respected tribes in East Africa. Nomadic for hundreds of years, they have a well-deserved reputation (of which they are proud) for fierce independence. I confess that I had mixed feelings about doing this seminar—a strong confidence in the Gospel to change hearts on the one hand, and fear of failure on the other. The assigned topic was: *The Qualities of an Effective Leader*.

How do you approach a group like this? Educationally, they ranged from none to university graduates. These were men who had speared lions and who prided themselves

in leading by sheer might, and I was coming with a message of leading by weakness and washing feet!

To begin, I scrawled two names in large letters on the blackboard that covered the front wall of our school classroom:

MANDELA MOBUTU

I asked the class to describe the chief leadership characteristics of each of these very well-known African presidents. The most significant qualities mentioned for Nelson Mandela were:

- a. *He does not love power.*
- b. *He does not use his position to gain honor or riches for himself.*
- c. *He is a real servant of his people and genuinely loves them.*

Impressive qualities, and equally impressive observations! These men were razor sharp. We discussed each of the traits and their opposites in the leadership style of Mobutu Sese Seko of Zaire who had died just weeks before.

Then, I suggested that my chief qualification for teaching the seminar was that I had done everything wrong for the first twenty-five years of ministry. I shared the specifics of my spiritual renewal—and of my former, Mobutu-style of church leadership, why I had led that way, and how it had affected the people under me.

Then I asked them if they felt the same tendencies in their hearts. My repentances took them completely by surprise, but rather than lose their respect, it won me the right to be heard. They physically *leaned forward* in rapt attention. My admission of sin gave them the courage to do something more frightening than facing a marauding lion—publicly admitting *their* sins of pride, self-love and love of honor. They owned up to them all. No contest.

Then we looked up the Scriptures we have quoted in various places in this lesson, and had them read aloud—first in Maasai, then English. We used the Scriptures to help us work through the following compound questions we had listed on the board. Their input was profound, and from then on, the lesson taught itself.



John ole Kirika sheds his usual trousers to model Maasai dress. Formerly a Moran (warrior), and one of my students, he is now a church-planter, partner in ministry, and dear friend.

1. Which one of these men, Mobutu, or Mandela, is most like Jesus in his style of leadership? *How?*
2. Which one of these men would your local congregation and your denominational district prefer to have leading them? *Why?*
3. For yourself, as a man, which of these men would you chose to rule over you? *Why?*
4. What fruits would be produced in your congregation under each of these styles of leadership? Which one would you prefer?
5. Specifically, how does "believing the Gospel" set us free from the desire to exercise lordship over others? Will you rest in Christ's righteousness so that the Holy Spirit can make you into a servant-leader? *When?*

I drove back to Nairobi that afternoon full of joy at the powerful demonstration of God's Spirit to convict of sin and renew hearts—and with an invitation (since repeated in writing) to teach the *SONSHIP for Africa* course to all the pastors and elders in their district. They want to know *more* of this new life in the Spirit, *more* of the Gospel—*more* of Christ.

4. BROKENNESS IN YOUR EVANGELISM OF THE LOST: A Call to "Weakness Evangelism" (Review: p. S10-10, 11 – *The Weeping Sikh*)

We Christians in Africa have never been found wanting in evangelistic boldness! As I think of the scores of Gospel sermons, Sunday School lessons and outdoor proclamations I have heard over my nine years here, the adjective "fearless" comes to mind. There have been times when the speakers have radiated such love and compassion for the lost that I have been moved to tears and more fervent prayer for the Spirit to come down and work in saving power.

But... there have been other times I have been tempted to pray that the Holy Spirit would *stop the message!* Why? There is nothing more offensive than evangelism marred by poor content, an unloving spirit, or questionable motives *because* the honor of Jesus Christ is at stake! Sadly, most of us have probably done evangelism poorly (I have), are the victims of those who have, or both.

First, I want to *defend* flawed evangelism. Then we will consider three very serious criticisms of it. Lastly, we will suggest a radical (but biblical and therefore more effective and God-glorifying) alternative.

a. Flawed evangelism defended

I used to be (and still am) a great critic of evangelistic methods. Now I can claim gray hair and long experience as an excuse, but I will never forget the humbling a group of us proud seminarians received from D. James Kennedy (founder of Evangelism Explosion) in 1968. He said, *"I like the way I do it better than the way you don't do it."*

With no slight to "E.E." or any other method of witnessing, the relevant question is: Can God use flawed evangelism to bring people to himself? The answer is, of course he can! Paul saw bad witnessing in his day and wrote:

It is true that some preach Christ out of envy and rivalry, but others out of goodwill

... The former preach Christ out of selfish ambition, not sincerely... but what does it matter? The important thing is that in every way, whether from false motives or true, Christ

is preached. And because of this I rejoice. — Phil. 1:15-18

To find out more about where Paul got such confidence in God's unstoppable work through the preaching of the Gospel, see two of the finest books in print on evangelism: C. John Miller's, *Powerful Evangelism for the Powerless*, and J. I. Packer's, *Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God* (see the Bibliography). Paul's confidence reflected Jesus' confidence that not one of the sheep the Father had given him would be lost! (Jn. 10:17; 17:14ff; Rom. 9:15ff; Acts 13:48; 16:13; etc.) These Scriptures should move you to grapple with the beautiful relationship of the Scripture's "whosoever will," and the doctrine of God's sovereign election. The implications for your evangelistic confidence and technique are profound. Don't buy into the idea that believing in God's election stifles evangelism. On the contrary, it sets it on fire with the promise of guaranteed results that are dependent on God's Spirit and not your exceptional good looks, intel-

lectual prowess or any of a hundred other variables.

But, with that said, Paul never settled for second-rate evangelism in his own ministry. Neither should we. Yes, God can use anything and anyone, but using someone or something in a pinch (like Jonah, or Balaam's ass) and *delighting* in it are not the same thing. I want to do God's work in God's way, and I believe you do too. To that end, we may need to repent of some of our "evangelistic results" if they were flawed, examine our methodology, listen to the voice of the Spirit, and make changes where needed—prayerfully and promptly.

b. Three criticisms of some modern-day evangelism: content, spirit and motive

Consider the *content* of evangelism." Paul defended the misguided preaching of his day with the words, *"The important thing... is that Christ is preached,"* which underscores a major problem with much modern-day "evan-

gelism"—Christ is not preached—at least not clearly enough for conversion! Take public "rally" evangelism for instance. Stop and listen to it—carefully. Occasionally it may be

A lot of what passes for evangelism today is as low in Gospel content as it is high in volume. An angry spirit in evangelism suggests a faulty motive for evangelism.

quite good. But...

more often than not, what is coming out of those howling loudspeakers is long on law and short on Gospel. It is well and good to preach the law. Men must see their sin before they understand their need for a savior. But after the law—and the sooner the better—show them Jesus! The knowledge of sin cannot save; faith in the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross can. So, *"preach Christ and him crucified!"* Don't leave out the atonement! Too many preachers do. *"Asking Jesus into your heart"* is no substitute for the vicarious sacrifice of the Son of God who "bore our sins in his body on the tree," who took the full cup of the Father's wrath due to us for our sins! Preach the cross!

Preach and teach these texts for evangelism: II Cor. 5:20, 21; Gal. 3:13; II Pet. 2:24 and Isa. 53. Call people to repent, to "transfer their trust" from their efforts to save themselves to Jesus. When you talk about man's sin, be sure to mention the "Chief of sinners"—yourself.

Too, the *spirit* of a lot of today's evangelism is contrary to the Spirit of Christ and the

Gospel. These adjectives come to mind: *proud, arrogant, combative, accusatory, unloving, insulting, and hateful*. Indeed, some preachers seem to have a spiritual gift not found anywhere in Paul's epistles: *offensiveness*. Forgive my strong words, but when Christ is preached in a spirit of anger and condemnation, the message of God's love for sinners is obscured to the point that it can actually harden people's hearts and hasten them down the road to hell! *Don't do it*. Preach Christ, the Messiah, the Lamb of God who quietly bled his life away on the cross for us, the gentle Jesus who took little children up in his arms to bless them, the one who said,

Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light. — Matt. 11:28-30

Yes, this Jesus made a whip of cords and cleansed the temple, but he will come again soon enough with a flaming sword of judgment in his mouth. *Today is the day of salvation—the hour of grace and of the free offer of the Gospel. Offer it!* Don't hold back your love from sinners. Think about this: How do you think Jesus felt towards the "rich young ruler?" The man rejected Jesus' call of "Come and follow me." Mark 10:21 says, *Jesus looked at him and loved him.* Love like that. And, as Jesus looked out over Jerusalem, a city full of people who in a matter of hours would be shouting, "Crucify him!" He wept over them, lamenting,

Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together as a hen gathers her chicks, but you would not come... (Lk. 13:34)

Let's preach this Christ in this spirit! An angry spirit in evangelism suggests a flawed motive for evangelism. Have you seen this—egos "on parade?" Some preachers get so obviously angry at their hearers, it has caused me to wonder whether they really want people to repent, or whether they are just modern-day Jonahs sitting on the hillside above Nineveh praying for its destruction! Jonah had a double problem. First, he lacked a heart of

mercy for sinners. Second, he had taken "personal ownership" of God's message to the extent that he felt his *personal reputation and honor* depended on people's reaction to it. He feared that if God did not judge Nineveh (as predicted) that he would be seen as a false prophet. If we become concerned that people's reception or rejection of the Gospel may either enhance or detract from our *reputation*, we are in big trouble. We will be tempted to manipulate people, and seek "results" with "scalp hunting zeal." (Packer, 1961, 80) And, we will be proud if we succeed, and ashamed or angry if we don't. *Broken hearted evangelists* do not deal in the currency of human achievement. If the glory of God is our paramount concern, when we feel our flesh rise up to demand its glory (and it will), we will be grieved and repent!

It's Not About You!

Josiah Bancroft
a good friend
and an American

can missionary to Ireland, is temporarily serving our mission as US Director. He was invited to be the keynote speaker at a "world missions conference" in a large Presbyterian church in the southern U.S. The host pastor, his close friend, gave Josiah the responsibility of choosing the theme of his messages. Knowing as he does the profound self-centeredness of the American church, he focused on Paul's "*our competence is not from ourselves, but from God*" (2 Cor. 10:4). Imagine the congregations' chagrin when he announced his theme: "**IT'S NOT ABOUT YOU!**" Ministry, he said, is not about my wishes, my ability, my personality, my training, my resources, or my holiness. It is not based on, or "about me" at all—but about a King and a Kingdom and reaching the world.

c. The better way of compassionate love: "*One beggar telling another beggar where he has found Bread.*"

Here I would simply point us back to the truth we considered in S-10: "*There is nothing quite so attractive to an unbeliever as a freshly broken Christian. . . . Their sharp edges are smoothed off, and there is nothing to boast in except the Cross of Christ!*" (Gal. 6:14)

It's true. When repentant Christians share the Gospel with unbelievers, what they hear is not a message of rejection and condemnation, but the amazing sound of people saying that they are such hopeless messes that it took the death of God's own son on the cross to save them. How honest. How

refreshing! How disarming! How alluring! First, include yourself, then show them their need. We are not trying to make a law of it, but suggest that you try it. Paul did the same on many occasions. (See Acts 22, 25, etc.) In all of our ministry, public preaching or teaching, private counseling, leading leaders, and now evangelism, the only thing we have to lose is our high-and-mighty reputations, and as Dr. Jack Miller used to tell us, *"A reputation is far too heavy a thing for a son to bear."* Sons and daughters don't need a reputation. Jesus is our reputation, and his righteousness our glorious dress. So, *"Wear it and share it!"*

CONCLUSION: WILL BROKENNESS REALLY "WORK?"

This lesson has said some hard things for us glory-loving, applause-seeking Christian leaders to hear. It tells us that the way up is down, that we bear the cross to wear the crown, and that *"the servant is not greater than his Lord."* (Jn. 13:16 – after Jesus washed feet) These ideas of brokenness, weakness, public repentance and servant-leadership may have seemed strange to us before this course began. But now that we have seen their Biblical roots and blessed fruits in our hearts, homes, and ministries, it is my prayer that they will become as familiar to our experience in the future as they were foreign to it in the past.

Our flesh flinches at this call to brokenness, but this is nothing new! God's mighty men and women who have gone before us fought the same battles with their pride. But the public confession of sin and weakness has not been limited to any one: time in history, geographic location, or culture. It has happened everywhere renewal has come—from Paul's Rome, to Zinzendorf's Germany, to Wesley's England, to Edwards' New England, and more relevant to us, to Mondo's Uganda when the great East African Revival of began in the 1930s. It swept Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, and then moved to Kenya, Tanzania, and South and West Africa! The symbol of the Revival was everywhere—a picture of a man kneeling with bowed head, repenting. *"What are you repenting of?"* was the watchword of the revival! (See: *"Walking in the Light"* 9-10)

In the course of this lesson, we have asked ourselves a number of hard questions. As we close, here is a question and a declaration:

♦ **A QUESTION:** *Can I say, from my heart, that I desire for God and only God to get all the glory from my life and my ministry of leading others—or is my hidden agenda to get the job done, and done well, so that I can look good, and thereby earn the approval of God and the praise of men?*

If you cannot affirm the first half of the question, we suggest that you take a leave from ministry until such time as you hate this sin against God and the Gospel, cry out for forgiveness for it, and ask for the Spirit's power over it as he replaces your love of praise with a deeper trust in Christ's righteousness, and a passion for God's glory.

♦ **OUR DECLARATION:** *In the future, as we feel the tendency to live for our own glory and the praise of men well-up within our hearts, rather than yield to it as our flesh would dictate, we hereby commit ourselves to run to the Mercy Seat of Christ with that sin, to fix our eyes on Jesus our Great High Priest who ever lives to make intercession for us, and to consciously clothe ourselves afresh with his righteousness which is our precious possession in the Gospel—the covering that frees us from our bondage to sin and self-love.*

So, we have asked, *"Does brokenness work?"* Sometimes. But, that's the wrong question. Isn't it? When we live and minister with a "broken and contrite heart" before God and men, it brings God great glory. *"It is not about us."* That was the note on which we began this SONSHIP course, and that is the most appropriate note on which to end it.

It is not for your sake, O house of Israel, that I am going to do these things, but for the sake of my holy name . . . I will show the holiness of my great name which has been profaned among the nations, the name you have profaned among them. Then the nations will know that I am the LORD, declares the Sovereign LORD, when I show myself holy through you, before their eyes. – Ezek. 36:22, 23

So, sons and daughters of God, loved and delighted in by the Father, cleansed by the Son, and empowered by the Holy Spirit, let's go forth together, and bring him glory!

– JWJL –





Fig. 16-7

WARFARE PRAYING!

Prayer: Is it "a Wartime Walkie-talkie, or a Domestic Intercom to call the Chambermaid to bring us more pillows?"

P RAYER is the walkie-talkie on the battle field of the world. It calls on God for courage (Eph. 6:19). It calls in for troop deployment and target location (Acts 13:1-3). It calls in for protection and air cover (Matt. 6:13; Lk. 21:36). It calls in for fire-power to blast open a way for the Word (Col. 4:3) It calls in for the miracle of healing for the wounded soldiers. (Jas. 5:16). It calls in for supplies for the forces (Mat. 6:11, Phil. 4:6). And it calls in for needed reinforcements (Matt. 9:38). This is the place of prayer—on the battlefield of the world. It is a wartime walkie-talkie for spiritual warfare, not a domestic intercom to increase the comforts of the saints. And one reason it malfunctions in the hands of so many Christian soldiers is that they have gone A.W.O.L.¹

A LMIGHTY God has spoken. If he is God, it is sure that his word will accomplish all his purpose. God's truth must win the spiritual war of the ages. But 2 Thessalonians 3:1 says, "Pray it will triumph!" I take this to mean that God will indeed cause his Word to be glorified. But he does not intend to win without prayer. God will be duly glorified when the knowledge of his glory "fills the earth like the waters cover the sea." (Habakkuk 2:14) And the earth will be filled with the knowledge of his glory when the Word of the Lord triumphs among all the peoples of the earth. And the Word will triumph through mighty, prevailing prayer. Therefore the intensity of God's pleasure in prayer is proportionate to the intensity of his passion that all his purposes be complete. If he loves his Son, if he loves his sovereignty, if he loves his creation, and his fame, and his electing grace, and his redeeming work, and the ingathering of all the children of God, then he must love prayer with all his heart.

¹ A.W.O.L. — Absent With Out Leave, i.e. desertion

I AM more convinced than ever that this gift is no mere convenience with which we settle in more nicely into this world. Rather God has given us prayer because Jesus has given us a mission. God's pleasure in the prayers of his people is proportionate to his passion for world evangelization. We are on this earth to press back the forces of darkness, and we are given access to Headquarters by prayer in order to advance this cause. When we try to turn it into a civilian intercom to increase our material comforts, it malfunctions, and our faith begins to falter.

Materialistic Evangelical Praying

D AVID BRYANT, founder of Concerts of Prayer International, tells about a young Hindu social worker who came to America and stayed at his house. He and his wife Robyne took her one evening to dinner at a friend's home. On the way the Hindu woman "witnessed" to David and Robyne. She showed them a picture of a guru who had died forty-five years ago. She and her family now worship him and pray to him. When Bryant blurted out, "But he's dead!" she disagreed, and said that in response to her prayers he has given her a very good life and surrounded her with many blessings.

When they got to the home where they would eat dinner, David Bryant hoped that his Christian friend would help bear a credible witness to this Hindu woman. But he was dismayed when at the dinner table his host said,

"Great house, isn't it? I know I put a lot more into it than I can ever hope to get out of it. But I don't mind. We plan to be here for the next forty-five years any way, God willing. We're so thankful. The Lord has blessed us in so many ways. I don't know what we'd do without him."

Bryant sat in his back yard the next morning asking himself, *'Is that the point of prayer—to treat God like Coca-Cola?'* Some people say, Things go better with Coke. Some say "Things go better with Christ!" Some say "Things go better with a guru!" A bird splashed into a nearby bird-bath and sent Bryant's mind to Matthew 6. "Yes," he thought, *'we are supposed to be as free and peaceful as the birds. But why? To seek first the Kingdom!'*

A Final Appeal for Wartime Praying

THE crying need of the hour—every hour—is to put the churches on a wartime footing. Mission leaders are crying out, *'Where is the church's concept of militancy, of a mighty army willing to suffer, moving ahead with exultant determination to take the world by storm? Where is the risk-taking, the launching out on God alone?'*

The answer is that it has been swallowed up in a peace-time mentality. Thousands of Christians do not hear the diabolic bombs dropping and the bullets zinging overhead. They don't smell the hellish Agent Orange in the whitened harvest of the world. They don't cringe or weep at the thousands who perish every week. They don't reckon with spiritual hosts of wickedness in heavenly places and the world rulers of this present darkness. In fact, it is not dark, they say. It is bright and comfortable and cheery—just look at my home and car and office and cabin and boat. And listen to my new disc-player and look at my new video equipment.

The need of the hour is a global war-time mentality. I say "wartime" because life is war (1 Tim. 6; 2 Cor. 10:3-5). I say "global" because "the field is the world" (Matt. 13:38). And because thousands of unreached peoples are scattered around the globe.

"Peoples," not just people. The command to the church is not to win every person before the Lord comes, but to win some from every people. This is the great unfinished task!

"To him shall be the obedience of the peoples" (Genesis 49:10).

"Let the peoples praise you, O God, let all the peoples praise you!" (Psalm 67:3).

"Behold, I made him a witness to the peoples, a leader and commander for the peoples" (Isaiah 55:4).

How will we come to feel the extraordinary Satanic devastation being wreaked among the remaining unreached peoples of the world? How can our people come to see the irrationality of a persistently bouncy, peacetime Disneyland mentality when the days are evil (Eph. 5:16), and the god of this world is blinding billions. (2 Cor. 4:4), and Satan is filled with rage because his time is short (Rev. 12:12), and the stakes are infinitely higher than any conceivable nuclear World War III or any environmental disaster (Lk. 12:4-5).



Fig. 16-8

How can a sense of urgency and vigilance and passion and zeal become part of the Christian ethos today? How can the sweaty, bruised, thrilling courage of wartime camaraderie become as deeply ingrained in our mind-set as the warm comfortable images of family and flock? How might we ever get our conference meetings out of the posh, luxurious hotels and convention centers and meet in something fitting for the Calvary Road—something that says wartime austerity, and radical sacrifice, and Spartan readiness to do anything at any pain for the King?

THE crying need for the last decade of this millennium is a global wartime mentality among all the pastors and churches and believers of the Christian Church. And this is doubly true because the sufferings on the home front are so great. *(Yes, even in the bouncy, positive, air-conditioned, video-equipped family rooms of America!)*

IN the time that it has taken me to write this special appeal I have received a call from a man in our church weeping because his wife is divorcing him and taking the children. I have met him and prayed. I have called her and made an appointment. *Now I am back trying to write the closing part of this chapter.*

Just hours later a woman called to say that her father was dying. I left the writing again and drove thirty minutes to his bedside and prayed. Two hours later he died. Again I am back at the keyboard trying to grasp the need of the world. Trying to feel the Satanic devastation not only of my own sin-sick church and city but also of the cities where there aren't 1,000 churches like there are in the Twin Cities of Minnesota. The phone rings off the hook. Your own kids fight and get sick. The marriage twists with unfulfilled expectations and self-pitying pouting. A hundred people have different ideas about the new church building, and the organ, and the parking lot.

And many say this is the real battle. Divorce, death, disagreement. But I don't believe it. Oh yes, it's real. And, yes, it's a battle. But it's not the main battle. Is the field hospital the main reason for having troops on the field? What's the main reason sergeants are in the trenches? To settle soldiers' disputes? Do chaplains come along just to bury the dead? Or is there a war to be won?

THERE is. And the victory is near. But it will not be easy or cheap. The awesome mission is clear: ***"This gospel of the kingdom will be preached throughout the whole world, as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come."*** — Matt. 24:14 Christ has his elect from every people, tribe, tongue and nation (Rev. 5:9). They are held captive by the Enemy (2 Tim. 2:26). And so the mine fields must be crossed, the barbed wire cut, the snipers evaded, and gospel antidotes for Satan's mind-altering drugs administered against immense opposition (Lk. 21:12-19).

SO again I ask, How will the church ever come to think this way? How will millions of lukewarm church-goers be brought to wartime readiness and put on military alert? How can the massive mentality of American prosperity, peace with the world, and family comfort, ever be overcome?

I BELIEVE the answer beneath an empowering of the Word of God, is a movement of believing, expectant prayer. Because it is prayer that opens our hearts to the surpassing worth of God (Eph. 3:17f.)

and makes us feel the height and depth of Christ's love (Eph. 3:18). It's prayer that makes us love lost people (1 Thess. 3:12) and have a passion for righteousness (Phil. 1:11). It's prayer that opens doors for the gospel (Col. 4:3) and brings in the recruits (Matt. 9:38), and makes them bold (Eph. 6:19). It's prayer that protects from the Enemy (Rom. 15:31; Matt. 6:13) and makes the Word of God *run* and be glorified! (2 Thess. 3:1) . . .

PATRICK JOHNSTONE sounds the urgent battle cry in his utterly strategic book, *Operation World*. In his words we see clearly the response God demands of us and the response in which the Lord delights. What then is the worth and excellency of such a God? *It is a solemn thing to intercede for the nations of the world! Let us mobilize prayer! We can tip the scales of history. Christians can be the controlling factor in the unfolding drama of today's world—let us not allow ourselves to be chased around by the enemy, but let us go up at once and take the kingdoms of this world for Jesus (Num. 13:30; Dan. 7:18) —He is delighted to give them to us (Dan. 7:22, 27; Lk. 12:32). In practical terms may these truths make our prayer lives as individuals, and in prayer meetings, outward-looking, Satan-shaking, captive-releasing, kingdom-taking, revival-giving, Christ-glorifying power channels for God!*

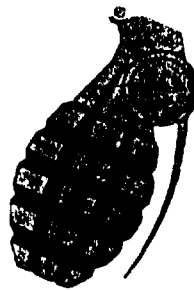


Fig. 16-9

IT IS CRUCIAL that all Christians see their life as a warfare. That is not all that it is. But it is that, always. We see this in Scripture. When Paul came to the end of his life, he said in 2 Timothy 4:7, *"I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith."* And in 1 Timothy 6:12 he tells Timothy, *"Fight the good fight of faith; lay hold on eternal life to which you were called."* So life is war because the maintenance of our faith and the laying hold on eternal life is a constant fight.

Paul makes it clear in 1 Thessalonians 3:5 that the number one target of Satan is faith. If we endure to the end we will be saved, Jesus said (Mark 24:13) Satan is fighting always to bring us to ruin by destroying our faith. Concerning his own life of warfare Paul said,

"I do not run aimlessly, I do not box as one beating the air; but I pommel my body lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified"

— 1 Corinthians 9:26-27

concerning his ministry he said,

"Though we live in the world we are not carrying on a worldly war, for the weapons of our warfare are not worldly but have divine power to destroy strongholds. We destroy arguments and every proud obstacle to the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ"

— 2 Corinthians 10:3-5

So life is war and ministry is war. That is what Revelation 12:17; 19:14 says! Probably the most familiar passage on the warfare we live in daily Ephesians 6:12,13

"We are not contending against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world rulers of this present darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore take the whole armor of God. . ."

MANY other passages could be brought in, but perhaps this is enough to make the urgent point that life is war—and we need to develop a wartime mentality—and a wartime lifestyle.

Excerpted from: *The Pleasures of God* by John Piper, Multnomah Press, 1991. Chapter 8, pp. 231—238.



A SONSHIP NOTE

Have you read challenging articles like this before, but they just made you feel guilty and you never did anything about what you read? You belong to a big club!

None of us is as faithful in prayer as we know we should be or want to be—not even John Piper. The question is, "HOW CAN WE IMPROVE?"

Listen ...

"Brothers, build yourselves up in your faith, and pray always in the Holy Spirit!"

— Jude 21

"Pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints. Pray also for me, that whenever I open my mouth, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it fearlessly, as I should."

— Eph . 6:16-20

"In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express. And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God's will."

— Rom. 8:26, 27



Fig. 16-10

Here are two suggestions on how to improve the amount and quality of your "Kingdom praying." If they can help someone as weak as me,

they can help anybody, but don't try to reverse the order!

FIRST: Pray for Your Praying. Paul and Jude tell us to "pray in the Spirit," and that the Holy Spirit "helps us in our weakness." Ask the Father to send the Spirit to help. (Lk. 11:13) It's his job! "Trying harder" in your flesh will not give you the will to change, the Spirit will. (Your flesh is the problem.) **THEN**, take the next step.

SECOND: Schedule Your Prayer Times: In our family, we have "Family Worship" right after the evening meal. It is not a "law," but we do it five or six nights a week, sometimes seven. And, my wife Becky and I have "an appointment" to meet together with the Father at 10:30 p.m. each night. We get a lot of good praying done in our family. God will bless you when by faith, you schedule times to be with him!

DO SOMETHING! Otherwise, the good intentions which have been aroused by this article will remain just that!

— JWJ —



An Effective Servant of God Is...

Strong enough to be weak
Successful enough to fail;
Busy enough to take time;
Wise enough to say, "I don't know;"
Serious enough to laugh;
Rich enough to be poor;
Right enough to say, "I'm wrong";
Compassionate enough to discipline;
Conservative enough to give freely;
Humble enough to say, "I'm sorry."
Mature enough to be childlike;
Righteous enough to be a sinner;
Important enough to be last;
Courageous enough to fear God
Planned enough to be spontaneous;
Controlled enough to be flexible;
Free enough to endure captivity;
Knowledgeable enough to ask questions;
Loving enough to be angry;
Great enough to be anonymous;
Responsible enough to play;
Assured enough to be rejected;
Stable enough to cry;
Victorious enough to lose;
Industrious enough to relax;
Leader enough to serve.

Adapted from "Paradoxes of a Man of God"
by Phillip C. Brewer —

Excerpted from the book
*"HOLY SWEAT - The Remarkable Things
Ordinary People Can Do
When They Let God Use Them"*
by Tim Hansel

APPENDIXES

The Argument of St Paul's Epistle to the Galatians

by Martin Luther, anno Domini 1535

Editors Note: Brief commentary has been added at some points and set apart by brackets. []. Some of the punctuation has been changed and archaic phrasing reworded for the benefit of the contemporary reader. — J.W. Long, Jr., Ed

DECLARATION Once again, in the name of the Lord I have taken in hand to expound the Epistle of St. Paul to the Galatians. I do this not because I desire to teach you new things or deal with matters you have not heard before, but because of fear. The greatest and most present danger is that Satan may take from us the pure doctrine of faith and bring the doctrine of works and men's traditions into the Church again.

FIRST of all, we must speak of the argument, that is of the issue with which Paul deals in this epistle. The issue is this: Paul wants to establish the doctrine of faith, grace, the forgiveness of sins or *Christian righteousness*, so that we may have a perfect knowledge and know the difference between *Christian* and all other kinds of righteousness. *For righteousness is of many kinds.* There is a *political* righteousness, which the emperor, the princes of this world, philosophers, and lawyers consider. There is also a *ceremonial* righteousness which human traditions teach—for example the traditions of the pope and other such traditions. Parents and teachers may teach *this* righteousness without danger because they do not attribute to it any power to make satisfaction to appease God's wrath or to earn grace. But they teach that these rules are necessary only for moral discipline and for maintaining a healthy social order. In addition to these there is yet another righteousness, *the righteousness of the Law*, of the Ten Commandments which Moses teaches. We, too, teach this, but in accordance with the obedience of faith in Christ. [Rom. 1:5 "Through him and for his name's sake, we received grace and apostleship to call people from among all the

Gentiles to the obedience that comes from faith

OVER and above all these there is the righteousness of faith, or *Christian righteousness*, which is to be most carefully distinguished from all the others. These others are contrary to this supreme righteousness because they: [1] proceed from the laws of emperors, the traditions of the pope, and the commandments of God, and [2] because they are made up of our works and can be achieved by us with "purely natural endowments," as the scholastics teach, or by common grace which God gives to the ungodly and the godly alike, for "He makes the rain to fall on the just and the unjust." Truly these other kinds of righteousness, though they be by works, are the good gifts of God, as are all the things we have. But this most excellent righteousness, *the righteousness, of faith*

[Romans 1:17] which God *imputes* to us through Christ *without works*, is neither political nor ceremonial nor legal nor works-righteousness but quite the opposite, it is a merely *passive* righteousness, while all the others mentioned before are *active*. For here we work nothing; we render *nothing* to God. *We only receive and permit someone else to work in us, namely, God!* Therefore, it is appropriate to call the righteousness of faith, *Christian righteousness*, "*passive*." This is a righteousness hidden in a mystery which the world does not understand.

In fact, Christians themselves do not adequately understand it or grasp it in the midst of their



Doctor Luther 1483-1546

"Here I stand; I can do no other.

God help me. Amen."

From his speech at the Assembly at Worms, Germany April 18, 1521

Fig. A-1

¹ The Latin phrase is *ex pnis naturalibus*; cf. *Luther's Works*, Vol. 2, p. 121, the meaning of the phrase in high scholastics: f. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, I - II, Q. 109, Article

temptations. Therefore it must always be appropriate to call this faith righteousness, or Christian righteousness "*passive righteousness*." Therefore it must always be taught and continually exercised, because anyone who does not grasp it or take hold of it in afflictions and terrors of conscience cannot stand. For there is no comfort of conscience so solid and certain as this *passive righteousness*.

BUT such is our human weakness and misery that when we are under the conviction of sin or when we are in danger of death, our focus shifts to our own works, our worthiness, and to the Law! Then, when the Law shows us our sin, our past life immediately comes to mind and in great anguish of mind, we groan and say to ourselves:

"Oh, how damnably I have lived! If only I could live longer! Then I would amend my life."

Knowing our real guilt before the Law, our human reason will not let us stop looking at active righteousness—that is our own righteousness—and let us shift our gaze to passive, that is, Christian righteousness. So deeply have we learned this evil habit, and so deeply is it rooted in us, that our minds try to *rest* in our own active righteousness. Satan takes advantage of this weakness in our nature! He increases and aggravates these thoughts in us until it is impossible for our conscience to avoid being *more* seriously troubled, confounded, and frightened! In the midst of its terror over the consciousness of sin, the human soul can find no way to comfort by looking only at grace. Nor can we consistently reject the attempts of our mind to justify us by works. To do this is beyond human power and thought—indeed it is even beyond the Law of God! For although the Law is the *best* of all things in the world, it still cannot bring peace to a terrified conscience. On the contrary, the Law makes it sadder and drives it to despair.

But in order that sin might be recognized as sin, it produced death in me through what was good, so that through the Law sin might become utterly sinful. — Romans 7:13

THEREFORE the afflicted conscience has no remedy against despair and eternal death except to take hold of the promise of grace offered

In Christ, that is, this *righteousness of faith*, this passive or *Christian righteousness*, which says with confidence:

"I do not seek active righteousness. I ought to have and perform it; but I declare that even if I did have it and could perform it, I cannot trust in it or stand up before the judgment of God on the basis of it! Therefore I put myself beyond all active righteousness, all righteousness of my own or of the divine Law, and I embrace only that passive righteousness which is the righteousness of grace, mercy, and the forgiveness of sins."

In other words, *this* is the righteousness of Christ and of the Holy Spirit. It is a righteousness which we do not perform. We receive what we do not have—but accept when God the Father grants it to us through Jesus Christ.

JUST as the earth does not produce the rain, nor is it able to acquire it by its own strength, worship, and power, but rather receives it only as a gift from heaven above, so this heavenly righteousness is given to us by God *without* our work or merit. To the *same extent* that the dry earth is able by itself to obtain the rain, we men are able to accomplish that divine, heavenly, and eternal righteousness by our own strength and works. So, we can obtain it *only* through the free imputation and indescribable gift of God! Therefore the highest art and wisdom of Christians is to *not know the Law*—but rather to *ignore* works [performed with a view to merit] and all active righteousness—just as among *unbelievers*, the highest wisdom is to *know* and study the Law, works, and active righteousness.

[Editor's Note: Dear Reader, At this point you may be struggling with "The Antinomian (anti-law) Question." Luther sounds like a lawbreaking radical! But let's hear him out. His insistence that "*our highest wisdom is not to know the law*" is neither heretical nor contradictory to David's "*How love I Thy law!*" He is arguing against the practice of the Medieval Church that instructed its members to spend their lives gazing on the Law instead of on the risen Christ. It was in the pursuit of good works, they were told, that they would merit heaven. Luther is *not* calling us to be lawbreakers, but *true* lawkeepers who walk in "*the obedience of faith*." The obedience God desires is

¹ A quotation from Bernard of Clairvaux, *Sermones in cantica*, Sermon XX, Patrologia, Latin Series, CLXXXIII, 887; also Luther's Works, 22, p. 52, note 42.

not the mere performance of outward acts of goodness. We can do those and have a bad heart. Jesus said, *"Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength... and love your neighbor as you love yourself."* – Matt. 12:38, 39. That is obedience. Nothing less will do. Paul echoed the same in Rom. 13:8-10, *"Let no debt remain outstanding except the continuing debt to love one another... he who loves his fellowman has fulfilled the whole law"* To suggest that we have "kept the Law" without reckoning with the concept of love as obedience is Pharisaism. Not outwardly stealing or committing adultery is just negative holiness since we can achieve it without ever loving anybody! But Paul says that love is *"the only thing that counts"* (Gal. 5:6). When we "walk by the Spirit," and are "led by the Spirit," we abound in love, and the law is truly kept. And, we love not because loving is a law keeping activity. Nor do we love because we suppose this will earn us God's favor or man's applause. We aren't focused on commandments or rewards at all. We love because the Spirit empowers us. The Christian life is grace, not law-driven. So Paul writes: *"But now by dying to what once bound us (the Law), we have been released from the Law so that we serve in the new way of the Spirit—not in the old way of the written code."* – Romans 7:6. Far from being antinomian, Luther knew, like Paul, what real Law keeping was all about.)

It is a marvelous thing and unknown to the world to teach Christians to ignore the Law and to live before God as though there were no Law whatever. For if you do not ignore the Law and thus direct your thoughts to grace as though there were no Law, but as though there were nothing but grace, you cannot be saved. *"For through the Law comes knowledge of sin."* (Rom. 3:20) On the other hand, works and the performance of the Law must be demanded in the world [among pagans who are by nature lawless] as though there were no promise or grace. This is because of the stubborn, proud, and hardhearted before whose eyes nothing must be set except the Law, in order that they may be terrified and humbled. For the Law was given to terrify and kill the stubborn and to exercise the old man.³ Both words must be correctly divided, according to the apostle.

THIS calls for a wise and faithful father who can moderate the Law in such a way that it stays within its limits. For if I were to teach men

the Law in such a way that they suppose themselves to be justified by it before God, I would be going beyond the limit of the Law, confusing these two righteousnesses—the active and the passive, and would be a bad dialectician who does not distinguish correctly. So the old man must be joined to the Law and to works, but the new man to the promise of God and to grace and mercy. Therefore, when I see that a man has become sufficiently contrite, oppressed by the Law, terrified by sin and thirsting for comfort, *then* it is time for me to take the Law and active righteousness from his sight. Now I can set before him, through the Gospel, the passive righteousness which *excludes* Moses and the Law, and I can show him the promise of Christ who came for the afflicted and for sinners! Here the man is raised up again and gains hope. Nor is he any longer under the Law. He is under grace as the apostle says: (Rom. 6:14; 10:4)

You are not under Law; but under grace, and, For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believes

Why not under law? According to the new man, the Law does not apply. For the Law had its place until Christ, as Paul says: (Gal. 3:24, 25)

So the law was put in charge to lead us to Christ that we might be justified by faith. Now that faith has come, we are no longer under the supervision of the law."

So, when Christ came, Moses and the Law stopped. So did circumcision, sacrifices and the Sabbath, and yes, all the prophets. (Gal. 4:9-11)

But now that you know God — or rather are known by God — how is it that you are turning back to those weak and miserable principles? Do you wish to be enslaved by them all over again? You are observing special days and months and seasons and years! I fear for you, that somehow I have wasted my efforts on you.

THIS is our theology by which we teach a precise distinction between these two kinds of righteousness, the *active* and the *passive* so that

³ On the meaning of this term see *Luther's Works*, Vol. 24, page 228.

morality and faith, works and grace, secular society and religion may not be confused. Both are necessary, but both must be kept within their limits. To wit: Christian righteousness applies to the new man, and the righteousness of the Law applies to the old man born of flesh and blood. *Upon this old man, as upon an ass, a burden must be put that will press him down.* He must not be allowed to enjoy the freedom of the Holy Spirit or of grace *unless* he has first put on the new man of faith in Christ! *Then* he may enjoy the kingdom and the ineffable gift of grace. I am saying this in order that no one may suppose that we reject or prohibit good works. The papists falsely accuse us of this but they do not understand either what they themselves are saying—or what we are teaching. They know nothing except the righteousness of the Law, and yet they claim the right to judge a doctrine that is far above the Law—a doctrine over which it is impossible that the carnal man be the judge. Therefore it is inevitable that they be offended, for they cannot see any higher than the Law. Therefore whatever is above the Law is the greatest possible offense to them.

[Note: Again, rather than assuming that Luther is antinomian, we need to grapple as he did with Paul's instruction to Timothy, "*We also know that the law is made not for the righteous, but for murderers, adulterers, etc...*" – 1 Tim. 1:9-11]

WE set forth two worlds, as it were, one of them heavenly and the other earthly. Into these we place these two kinds of righteousness which are distinct and separate from each other. *The righteousness of the Law* is earthly and deals with earthly things. By it we perform good works. But as the earth does not bring forth fruit unless it has first been watered and made fruitful from above (for it cannot rule, be renewed and bear fruit by itself) so that it may do what the Lord has commanded. So also by the righteousness of the Law we do nothing even when we do much. We do not fulfill the Law even when we fulfill it. Without any merit or work of our own, we must first be justified by *Christian righteousness*, which has nothing to do with the righteousness of the Law or with earthly and active righteousness. But this righteousness is heavenly and passive. We do not have it of ourselves—we receive it from heaven. We do not perform it, we accept it by faith, through which we ascend beyond all laws and works. "*As, therefore, we*

have borne the image of the earthly Adam," as Paul says, "*let us bear the image of the heavenly one*" (1 Cor. 15:49) who is a new man in a new world where there is no Law, no sin, no conscience, no death, but perfect joy, righteousness, grace, peace, life, salvation, and glory.

THEN, do we do nothing and work nothing in order to obtain this righteousness? I reply: *Nothing at all.* For this righteousness means to do nothing, to hear nothing, and to know nothing about the Law or about works but to know and believe only this: *that Christ has gone to the Father and is now invisible; that He sits at the right hand of the Father, not as a Judge but as one made for us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption from God.* (1 Cor. 1:30) In short, this righteousness means that He is our High Priest, interceding for us and reigning over us and in us through grace. Here one notices no sin and feels no terror or remorse of conscience. Sin cannot happen in this Christian righteousness, for where there is no Law, there can be no transgression (Rom. 4:15). If therefore, sin does not have a place here, there is no conscience, no terror, no sadness. Therefore John says: "*No one born of God commits sin*" (1 Jn. 3:9). But if there is any conscience or fear present, this is a sign that this righteousness has been withdrawn, that grace has been lost sight of, and that Christ is hidden and out of sight. But where Christ is truly seen, there must be full and perfect joy in the Lord and peace of heart, where the heart declares:

Although I am a sinner according to the Law, judged by righteousness of the Law, nevertheless I do not despair. I do not die, because Christ lives who is my righteousness and my eternal and heavenly life! In that righteousness and life I have no sin, conscience, or death. I am indeed a sinner according to the present life and its righteousness, as a son of Adam where the Law accuses me, death reigns and devours me. But above this life I have another righteousness—another life, which is Christ, the Son of God, who does not know sin and death but is righteousness and eternal life. For His sake this body of mine will be raised from the dead and delivered from the slavery of the law and sin, and will be sanctified together with the spirit.

THUS as long as we live here, both remain. The flesh is accused, exercised, saddened, and crushed by the active righteousness of the Law. But the spirit rules, rejoices, and is saved by passive righteousness—because it knows that it has a Lord sitting in heaven at the right hand of the Father, who has abolished the Law, sin and death, and has trodden all evils underfoot, has led them captive and triumphed over them in Himself (Col. 2:15) In this Epistle, therefore, Paul is concerned to instruct, comfort, and sustain us diligently in a perfect knowledge of this most excellent and Christians righteousness. For if the doctrine of justification is lost, the whole of Christian doctrine is lost. And those in the world who do not teach it are [terribly mistaken, for between these two, the active righteousness of the Law, and the passive righteousness of Christ, there is no middle ground.

Therefore he who has strayed away from this Christian righteousness will necessarily relapse into active righteousness—that is, when he has lost Christ, he must fall into a trust in his own works.

I am indeed a sinner according to this present life and its righteousness. . . but above this life ~ I have another righteousness, another life, which is Christ, the Son of God.

WE see this today in the fanatical spirits and sectarians who . . . cling only to the righteousness of the Law. Because of this, they are and remain Disciplinarians of Works—nor can they rise beyond active righteousness. They remain exactly what they were before [they professed Evangelical faith]. To be sure, they invent new names and new works, but the content remains the same. So it is that Muslims perform different works from the papists, and the papists perform different works from the Hebrews, and so forth. But although some do works that are more splendid, great, and difficult than others, the content remains the same, and only the *quality* is different. That is, the works vary in appearance and in name, but they are still works...

THEREFORE we always repeat, urge, and so often repeat this doctrine of faith or *Christian righteousness*, so that by this means it may be kept in continuous exercise and may be precisely distinguished from the active righteousness of the Law. *For by this doctrine alone and through it alone is the church built, and in this it consists.* Otherwise

we shall not be able to observe true theology but shall immediately become lawyers, ceremonialists, legalists, [etc.] *And, Christ will be so darkened that no one in the church will be correctly taught or comforted. Therefore if we want to be preachers and teachers of others, we must take great care in these issues and hold to this distinction between the righteousness of the Law and that of Christ.* This distinction is easy to speak of; but in experience and practice it is the most difficult of all, even when you work at it diligently. For without your bidding them, in the hour of death or in other conflicts of conscience, these two kinds of righteousness draw near and contend with one another.

THEREFORE I admonish you, especially those of you who are to become instructors of consciences, as well as each of you individually, that you exercise yourselves by study, by reading, by meditation, and by prayer, so that in temptation you will be able to instruct consciences—both your own and those of others. You must be able to console them, and take them from

the Law to grace, from active righteousness to passive righteousness, in short, from Moses to Christ. In affliction and in the conflict of conscience it is the devil's habit to frighten us with the Law. He will set against us the consciousness⁴ of sin, our wicked past, the wrath and judgment of God, hell and eternal death, so that he may drive us into despair, subject us to himself, and pluck us away from Christ. It is also his habit to use against us those passages in the Gospel in which Christ Himself requires works from us and with plain words threatens damnation to those who do not perform them.

If we cannot distinguish between these two kinds of righteousness; if by faith we do not take hold of Christ who is sitting at the right hand of God, who is our life and our righteousness, and who makes intercession for us miserable sinners before the Father (Heb. 7:25), then we are under the Law and not under grace, and Christ is no longer a Savior. Then he is a lawgiver. Then there can be no salvation left, but sure despair and eternal death will follow.

⁴ As in other of Luther's writings, here the Latin *conscientia* denotes our consciousness, not conscience.

THEREFORE let us learn diligently this art of distinguishing between these two kinds of righteousness so that we may know how far we should obey the Law. We have said before that in a Christian the Law must not exceed its limits. It should have its dominion only over the flesh which remains under its subjection. When this is the case, the Law remains within its limits. But if it wants to ascend into the conscience and exert its rule there, see to it that you play the cunning logician and make the correct distinction. Give no more to the Law than it has coming, and say to it:

Law, you want to climb up into the realm of my conscience and rule there. You want to denounce its sin and take away the joy of my of my heart which I have by faith in Christ. You want to drive me to desperation that I may be without hope and utterly perish. You are exceeding your jurisdiction. Stay within within your bounds and exercise your dominion over the flesh. You shall not touch my conscience. For I am baptized; and through the Gospel I have been called to a fellowship of righteousness and eternal life, to the kingdom of Christ, in which my conscience is at peace, where there is no Law but only the forgiveness of sins, peace, quiet, happiness, salvation, and eternal life. Do not disturb me in these matters! In my conscience the law will not reign—that hard tyrant and cruel disciplinarian—but only Christ the Son of God, the King of peace and righteousness, the sweet Savior and mediator! He will preserve my conscience happy and peaceful in the sound and pure doctrine of the Gospel and in the knowledge of this passive righteousness.

THEN I have this righteousness within me, I descend from heaven like the rain that makes the earth fertile. That is, I come forth into another kingdom, and in the Spirit I perform good works whenever the opportunity arises. If I am a *minister of the Word*, I preach, I comfort the saddened and I administer the sacraments. If I am a *father*, I govern my household and family well, and train my children in piety and honesty. If I am a *magistrate*, I perform the office I have received by divine command. If I am a *servant*, I faithfully tend to my master's affairs. In short, whoever knows for sure that Christ is his righteousness not only cheerfully and gladly works in his calling—but also submits himself for the sake of love to magistrates, also to their wicked laws, and to everything else in this

present life—even, if need be, to burden and danger. For he knows that God wants this and that this obedience pleases Him. [ref. Rom. 13:1-5; 1 Pet. 2:19; 4:12]

"If the doctrine of justification is lost, the whole of Christian doctrine is lost."

THIS then, is the argument of the Epistle which Paul sets forth because of the false teachers who had obscured this righteousness of faith in the church of Galatia. Against these he asserts his authority and office.



A mighty fortress is our God,
A Bulwark never failing.
A Helper, He, amid the flood
of mortal ill^s prevailing.
For still our ancient foe,
doth seek to work us woe;
His craft and pow'r are great;
And armed with cruel hate,
On earth is not his equal.

Did we in our own strength confide,
Our striving would be losing.
Were not the right Man on our side,
The Man of God's own choosing.
Dost ask who that may be?
CHRIST JESUS, it is he!
Lord Sabaoth his Name,
From age to age the same,
And He must win the battle!

— M. Luther, AD 1529

This *SONSHIP for Africa* edition of Luther's Argument to the Galatians was compiled from the following sources.

1. *Luther's Works*, Volume 26, *Lectures on Galatians* 1535, Jaroslav Pelikan, German Translator & Editor, Walter A. Hansen, Assoc. Editor, Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, 1963.

2. *Luther's Commentary on Galatians*, English Translation by Erasmus Middleton, B.D., Edited by John Prince Fallows, M.S. Pembroke College, Cambridge, Kregel Publications, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1979.

3. Luther, Martin. 1996. *Commentaries on Galatians* (Simpsonville, SC: Christian Classics Foundation), Logos Library System CD-ROM Electronic Edition, 1996.

— John Wade Lott, Jr.

APPENDIX B

Dr. Francis Schaeffer vs. Bishop J. C. Ryle on Sanctification

It's a question of means—not, "Should we be holy?," but "How?"

Bishop Ryle wrote about the need for obedience

Let us. . . beware of despising the law of the Ten Commandments. Let us not suppose for a moment that it is set aside by the Gospel, or that Christians have nothing to do with it. The coming of Christ did not alter the position of the Ten Commandments one hair's breadth. If anything, it exalted and raised their authority. (Rom. iii.31) . . . Let us beware of supposing that the Gospel has lowered the standard of personal holiness, and that *the Christian is not intended to be as strict and particular about his daily life as the Jew*. . . The more light we have, the more we ought to love God. . . May we never forget our obligations! The Christian who is content with a low standard of personal holiness has got much to learn (Ryle n.d., *Thoughts*, 1:88, 89, emphasis mine).

We hear the same strident tone in this exhortation from his 1879 volume, *Holiness*:

Genuine sanctification will show itself in habitual respect for God's law, *and habitual effort to live in obedience to it as a rule of life*. There is no greater mistake than to suppose that a Christian has nothing to do with the law and the Ten Commandments, because he cannot be justified by keeping them (Ryle n.d., *Holiness*, 27, emphasis mine).

Schaeffer vs. Ryle

Ryle's mandate that we make a "*habitual effort to live in obedience to it [the law] as a rule of life*" is not wholly wrong, but it is terribly incomplete and therefore dangerously misleading on two counts: [1] "Habitual effort" points to human effort, to moral willpower—not helplessly dependent faith in Christ and reliance on the Holy Spirit. [2] Human effort to keep the law is legalism. New Testament sanctification involves faith in Christ which the Holy Spirit blesses with his fruit—the chief of which is love, the fulfillment of the law (Gal. 3: 1-5). Human effort to obey the law for sanctification was at the heart of the Galatian heresy.

In *True Spirituality*, Schaeffer speaks to the notion of "trying harder." He asks why the "what could be" and "what is" of our Christian lives have differed so tragically, and why we have so often "brought forth the fruit of the Lord's enemy, the devil, instead of the fruit of our lover, our Lord" (1971, 83). Reading Schaeffer and Ryle affords us a fascinating look at two contrasting paradigms of the Christian life. Ryle relies on constantly admonishing his readers to make a "habitual effort" to live in obedience to the law "as a rule of life"—a Mosaic model. Schaeffer calls us into conscious union with Christ—a Pauline model which will yield a life of joyful, loving obedience—not mere external compliance to "the rules."

Schaeffer writes:

There two main reasons why we may not be bringing forth the fruit we should. 1.) It may be because of ignorance because we may never have been taught the meaning of the work of Christ for our present lives. There are five possible "ignorances" in this area. First, the Christian may have been taught how to be justified but never taught the present meaning of the work of Christ for him. Second, he may have been taught to become a Christian through the instrumentality of faith, but then he may have been left, as though from that point on the Christian life has to be lived in his own strength. Third, he may have been taught the opposite. That is, that having accepted Christ, in some antinomian (anti-law) way it does not now matter how he lives. Fourth, he may have been taught some kind of second blessing, which would make him perfect in this life when he receives it. This the Bible does not teach. And therefore he just waits hopelessly, or tries to act upon that which is not. Fifth, he may never have been taught that there is a reality of faith to be acted on consciously after justification. This last point is the point of ignorance of many who stand in the orthodox and historic stream of the Reformation.

Here, Schaeffer has put his finger on one of the residual "toxins" in the stream of Reformation theology in which we modern Evangelicals swim: We have felled whole forests to produce books that are filled with words about the necessity of sanctification, words of infinite precision which define the linkage between justification and sanctification, and words about the Holy Spirit as the divine agent of sanctification, but it is the rare book which goes beyond the "oughts" and "shoulds" to treat the Biblical means of obedience: faith. Thus far we have demonstrated that even in the Reformed tradition (in which the author stands), we have for the most part either been woefully ignorant, terribly neglectful, hopelessly vague, or just plain in error as we have dealt with sanctification's means. Schaeffer goes on to point out that ignorance about the means of sanctification will exact an awful toll on us, in that the Christian may not "possess his possessions" in this present life." (1971, 84) In using the word "possessions," he refers to the fruit of the Spirit supernaturally produced, i.e., real growth in holiness. Next, he explains the how we must not only understand, but act on the fact that faith in Christ sanctifies. Adding his own personal testimony, he notes that believers who discover this for the first time may have a sense of a "second conversion" (a remarkable description of our renewal in 1990).

But when a man does learn the meaning of the work of Christ in the present life, a new door is open to him. And this new door then seems to be so wonderful that often it gives the Christian, as he begins to act upon that knowledge of faith, the sense of something that is as new as was his conversion. And it has been true for many of us that at a certain point, after we have been Christians for a long time, suddenly through he teaching of the Bible—directly or through someone teaching us—we have seen the meaning of the work of Christ and the blood of Jesus Christ for our present life, and a new door opens for us. So what is needed is the knowledge of the meaning of the work of Christ in our present life, for our present life, and then for us to act upon it in faith.

Next, Schaeffer notes that if we stop short of making the doctrine of justification daily and consciously ours, we will have no power in our faith for sanctification. He says:

In the last analysis it is never doctrine *alone* that is important. It is always doctrine *appropriated* that counts. We can see this in the case of justification. There are many men, unhappily, who have heard the gospel and know the gospel, but do not take Christ as their Savior. In such a case a man had the knowledge, but it means nothing to him, because he has not taken it. It may be so with us in this matter of our present life. We may know the truth, we may have the knowledge, but it has not been appropriated, and so it will not mean anything to us in practice, and the fruit will not be born. But we do not need to be either ignorant or confused. If we are truly Christians, we know how we were justified when we became Christians. *The practice of sanctification is very much parallel to what we know from justification.* In other words, if I am a Christian at all, I have been justified, and thinking back to my justification, all I have to do is to see the parallelisms between justification and the Christian life.

When I see these, there is no reason either to be ignorant or confused, because there are these very definite parallels. In justification the basis is the finished work of Jesus Christ; in sanctification it is the finished work of Christ. In justification we must see, acknowledge, and act upon the fact that we cannot save ourselves. *In sanctification* we must see, acknowledge, and act upon the fact that we cannot live the Christian life in our own strength, or in our own goodness.

In justification the instrument by which we receive the free gift of God is faith, which believes God as he has given us his promises in the Bible. *In sanctification* the instrument by which we receive the free gift of God is faith, which believes God as he has given us his promises in the Bible. It is exactly the same thing. There is one difference between the practice of justification and sanctification. As justification deals with our guilt, and sanctification deals with the problem of the power of sin in our lives as Christians, justification is once for all, and the Christian life is moment by moment. There is a difference in that one deals with the *guilt* of my sin, and the other deals with the *power* [or authority] of sin in my life.

If we are Christians, we have understood and acted upon the finished work of Christ once for all at our justification, and our guilt is gone forever. *Now let us understand and act upon the practice of that same work moment by moment in our present lives.*

Let me repeat: the only difference in the practice is that in justification it is once for all, and the Christian life is lived moment by moment. The Christian life is acting moment by moment on the same principle, and in the same way, as I acted at the moment of my justification (1971, 84-6).

J. C. Ryle's putting our "habitual effort to obey" in the place of faith, represents all that is wrong with modern Evangelical teaching on holiness. Francis Shaeffer, in discerning the Biblical order—that our union with Christ by faith produces obedience to the law, represents all that is right. It's a question of *means*.

— JWL —



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NATIONAL NEWS



Christians of Githa All*CA Church fight it out on the church's compound yesterday. Five of them were taken to hospital while 10 recorded statements with the police.

Worshippers hurt in fight at church

By MWANGI WAIRINDI

A number of elderly Christians were injured in a fight at a church in Githunguri, Kiambu, yesterday.

The old men and women, many in their 70s, exchanged blows and kicks and fought with sticks, whips and rungas.

The Christians, belonging to two factions, clashed on the compound of the Githa Africa Independent Pentecostal Church of Africa over which group should hold the Sunday service at the venue.

Five of them were taken to hospital after the fight, while 10 recorded statements at Githunguri Police Station.

The church has been embroiled in wrangles since last November when 34 church elders were voted out but refused to relinquish the positions.

Yesterday's chaos started when the 34 elders locked the gates to the church and ordered the other worshippers to go away. Those who were locked out broke the gate and entered the compound and a fight ensued.

One group was overpowered and retreated, but they regrouped and launched a fresh attack.

Those on the compound retaliated by throwing snuff at their attackers.

Women and children screamed and sneezed after inhaling the snuff.

After the fracas, four sons of one of the old men involved arrived, armed with swords.

However, their father, who was bleeding profusely, prevailed upon them not to attack. He said he would personally deal with his attackers. The old man lost three

teeth in the fight.

After the controversial elections last November, the 34 elders elected their own deacon to lead services and locked the church.

Since then, the two groups have been conducting separate services on the church compound.

The leader of the youthful group, Mr Paul Kimani, told journalists that they had on many occasions called police to quell fights between the two groups but the officers did not respond.

Four worshippers who went to call the police yesterday got a rude shock when the officers said they could not interfere in church disputes.

The 34 elders said they would not allow the church to be "hijacked" by the youth.

"How can we be led by our children? We fought the white

man during the struggle for independence and there is no way we can be overrun by these boys," said Mr John Wakaba.

The deacon, Mr John Gikoni, said he would not let the 34 elders to be thrown out of the church leadership.

Mr Kimani and four of the old men have a case at the Githunguri law courts where they have been charged with being in possession of dangerous weapons during a confrontation in January.

However, Mr Wakaba said the elders would never let the youthful group to run the church, "even if they go to court".

Mr Kimani said his faction will seek a meeting with the Kiambu district commissioner over the dispute. The group is ready to resolve the dispute, even if it means repeating the elections.

APPENDIX D

"Joe and Jesus"

from *Abba's Child*

by Brennan Manning

This story of Joe and Jesus first appeared in *Lion and Lamb: The Relentless Tenderness of Jesus*, by Brennan Manning. The story is retold in his newer book, *ABBA's Child*, and, he admits that this is "*a desperate measure, but sales are slipping and I need a new pair of sandals*" (1994, 181). The story is from an acquaintance of Manning's, a Catholic priest, and we include it as a powerful illustration of the intimacy we *can* have with Christ, if we will allow ourselves to "be gathered together under his wings" (Matt. 23:27).

There was reclining on Jesus' breast one of His disciples, whom Jesus loved. Simon Peter therefore gestured to him, and said to him, "Tell us who it is of whom He is speaking." He, leaning back thus on Jesus' breast, said to Him, "Lord, who is it?" -- John 13:23-25

Brennan writes:

To read John 13:23-25 without faith is to read it without profit. To risk the passionate life, we must be "affected by" Jesus as John was; we must engage His experience with our lives rather than with our memories. Until I lay my head on Jesus' breast, listen to His heartbeat, and personally appropriate the Christ-experience of John's eye-witness, I have only a *derivative* spirituality. My cunning impostor will borrow John's moment of intimacy and attempt to convey it as if it were my own.

Once I related the story of an old man dying of cancer. The old man's daughter had asked the local priest to come and pray with her father. When the priest arrived, he found the man lying in bed with his head propped up on two pillows and an empty chair beside his bed. The priest assumed that the old fellow had been informed of his visit. "I guess you were expecting me," he said.

"No, who are you?"

"I'm the new associate at your parish," the priest replied. "When I saw the empty chair, I figured you knew I was going to show up."

"Oh yeah, the chair," said the bedridden man. "Would you mind closing the door?"

Puzzled, the priest shut the door.

"I've never told anyone this, not even my daughter," said the man, "but all my life I have never known how to pray. At the Sunday Mass I used to hear the pastor talk about prayer, but it always went right over my head. Finally I said to him one day in sheer frustration, 'I get nothing out of your homilies on prayer.'

"'Here,' says my pastor reaching into the bottom drawer of his desk. 'Read this book by Hans Urs von Balthasar. He's a Swiss theologian. It's the best book on contemplative prayer in the twentieth century.'

"Well, Father," says the man, "I took the book home and tried to read it. But in the first three pages I had to look up twelve words in the dictionary. I gave the book back to my pastor, thanked him, and under my breath whispered 'for nothing'."

"I abandoned any attempt at prayer," he continued "until one day about four years ago my best friend said to me, 'Joe, prayer is just a simple matter of having a conversation with Jesus. Here's what I suggest. Sit down on a chair, place an empty chair in front of you, and in faith see Jesus on the chair. It's not spooky because He promised, 'I'll be with you all days.' Then just speak to Him and listen in the same way you're doing with me right now.'"

"So, Padre, I tried it and I've liked it so much that I do it a couple of hours every day. I'm careful though. If my daughter saw me talking to an empty chair, she'd either have a nervous breakdown or send me off to the funny farm."

The priest was deeply moved by the story and encouraged the old guy to continue on the journey. Then he prayed with him, anointed him with oil, and returned to the rectory.

Two nights later the daughter called to tell the priest that her daddy had died that afternoon.

"Did he seem to die in peace?" he asked.

"Yes, when I left the house around two o'clock, he called me over to his bedside, told me one of his corny jokes, and kissed me on the cheek. When I got back from the store an hour later, I found him dead. But there was something strange, Father. In fact beyond strange, kinda weird. Apparently just before Daddy died, he leaned over and rested his head on a chair beside his bed."

The Christ of faith is no less accessible to us in His present risenness than was the Christ of history in His human flesh to the beloved disciple. John emphasizes this truth when he quotes the Master: "I tell you the truth: it is much better for you that I go" (16:7, NASB). Why? How could Jesus' departure benefit the whole community of believers? First, "because unless I go, the Advocate will not come to you, but if I do go, I will send him to you." Second, while Jesus was still visible on earth, there was the danger that the apostles would be so wedded to the sight of His human body that they would trade the certainty of faith for the tangible evidence of the senses. To see Jesus in the flesh was an extraordinary privilege but more blessed are they who have not seen and yet believed. (John 20:29).



Excerpted from: *ABBA'S Child*, by Brennan Manning. NavPress Publishing Group, Colorado Springs, Colorado. 1994. pp. 126-28. Originally appeared in: *Lion and Lamb: The Relentless Tenderness of Jesus*, Old Tappan, NJ: Revell/Chosen, 1986, pages 129-130, and is now available through Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, MI.

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PART III
A DISCIPLER'S GUIDE
FOR
SONSHIP FOR AFRICA

a DISCIPLER'S GUIDE
for
SONSHIP[®] *for*



A DISCIPLE'S GUIDE

for SONSHIP for Africa

"Spiritual growth is not produced by the transfer of information, but by responses to faith." – Richard Lovelace, Dynamics of Spiritual Life, p. 11.

INTRODUCTION

Authentic personal revival begins with the fresh realization, *"Jesus is for me!"* and it continues in the same way—but—it can never stop there. If it does, the tender new plant of renewal will wither and die in the toxic soil of self-centeredness. God made fruit trees to bear fruit for his glory, and that is what we are—what you are! The Gospel has obviously made a deep impact on your life, or you wouldn't have completed the *SONSHIP for Africa* course. That you are eager to begin teaching others is a sign that your renewal is just getting started! *How exciting that God has brought you to this point!* Your discipler has disciplined you, and now, he or she is saying to you what Paul said to the young pastor Timothy:

And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others. – II Tim. 2:2

That we have given you this manual means that we believe you are a "reliable" man or woman with whom we can entrust the things you have heard us say—that is, the word of the Gospel. No, don't fear. We don't expect you to "be reliable" in your own strength! We certainly are not! One reason we chose you is that we have seen "the fruit of weakness" in you! Stay weak! It will keep you depending on Jesus for your competency instead of yourself. *"Dependant dependability"* is what God uses! Listen to Paul:

You yourselves are our letter, written on our hearts, known and read by everybody. You show that you are a letter from Christ, the result of our ministry, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts. . . . Not that we are competent in ourselves to claim anything for ourselves, but our competence comes from God. He has made us competent as ministers of a new covenant—not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.
– II Cor. 3:2–6

You need to know what a privilege it is for us to partner with you in what is now your ministry of *SONSHIP* training! May you be used of the Spirit to see many "orphans" transformed into conscious sons and daughters. May you hear many "Abba-Father!" cries, and, in the process, see many people who have been struggling unsuccessfully to grow because they "haven't been born yet," born again!

So, welcome to the renewal team! God has put you "in the loop"—in a cycle of renewal that begins in one heart, spreads to a family, a dormitory, a school, a Bible class, a congregation, a city, a nation, a continent—and who knows where else! May he bless and strengthen you as you bear fruit for his glory and praise to have a vital part in seeing his *"Kingdom come, and his will be done on earth, as it is in heaven!"*

NOW, it's time to get down to work — faith-work, that is!

THE PURPOSE OF THIS MANUAL

This manual is designed to help you lead others through the *SONSHIP for Africa* course, lesson-by-lesson, step-by-step, and, do it in such a way that you the teacher are the living embodiment of what you teach—a God-loving, Gospel-understanding, Spirit-dependent man or woman who is equipped to help others grow in the knowledge and likeness of Jesus.

A. THE HEART and MECHANICS of DISCIPLING with SONSHIP

TEACHING TIPS

It will be helpful to keep referring to these suggestions throughout the course, especially your first time through. Bad habits are easy to form and hard to break. We read them because we forget them—even after teaching Sonship over twenty times! (Good teaching habits are alien to our personality!)

Of First Importance: Remember, you are in Partnership with the Father.

Good news: you are not alone! God is a lot more interested in discipling your students in the Gospel than you are! This is his business, and he has put the Holy Spirit in you to teach you so that you can teach others.

And, you don't have to be "the arrived one!" We "graduate" from the *SONSHIP for Africa Course*, but we never graduate from the sonship for life course. You have the privilege of being a student along with your students. You don't have to be the expert; in fact, you need to be weak if you are to disciple them in weakness! They need to see you depending on Jesus if they are to learn to depend on Jesus. The principles of living a life of grace by faith are "slippery," like a bar of soap, and they will slip out of your heart just like they will out of your students' hearts. Expect it—and don't be embarrassed when you fall. Repent—and when they see you repent, they will really begin to believe that the Gospel is for sinners like them!

The only difference between you and your students is that (hopefully) you have experienced and are experiencing the ongoing joy that comes from a life of brokenness and repentant faith in the Jesus Christ.

There is no pressure on you in this course to be a "Super Christian." The pressure is on you to be weak and boast in your weakness so that the Power of Christ may be seen in you. Believe it: It is a lot more difficult to "walk in weakness" than it is to fake "walking in power." To walk in weakness, you have to keep dying to your self-righteousness, and it will keep rising back up all the time. Don't "try harder," trust more completely. God is going to have a wonderful time working in you and through you! Depend on him. Teach with a conscious sense of his presence with you, because he is with you. Think of Christ, seated at the Father's Right hand with a BIG SMILE, as you exalt him, talk about his Cross, his love, his glory, and his beauty.

PRAY as you Begin each Session

As you begin each lesson, always lead your students into the Throne Room of the universe through the blood of Jesus. Include yourself as a needy sinner, but one who is a confident loved son or daughter, forgiven and at peace with the Father. Ask the Spirit to

bring conviction of sin to all gathered and to use "us all" for the furthering of the Kingdom of Jesus Christ. Pray for a sensitive heart to the Holy Spirit's prompting. There may be times when you sense He wants you to call for a time of repentance and prayer with the whole group. It's a great blessing to see Him move in dramatic ways convicting men and women of sin. Large-Group prayer for a repenting brother or sister can be a powerful experience for the class and a time of renewal for all involved. Jesus' spoke of the "living water" that would flow from the believer who comes to Him, will no longer be words only. Times of singing at the beginning of class are sometimes appropriate as well.

The texts on which the following outlines are based are in your *SONSHIP* manual, but it is imperative that you, the teacher CAPTURED by the truths in it and that you express them in your own words rather than just reading the lessons verbatim.

Small groups should have no more than five or six people in them so that everyone will be able to participate. Encourage the students to share the things they are learning. When one person's faith grows, it greatly encourages the faith of others.

There are a number of valuable charts and drawings in the *SONSHIP* which you can teach using a chalkboard or whiteboard — or on the ground using a stick! (We have used paper napkins in restaurants to teach a lesson!) JUST USE SOMETHING! You can also draw the charts on poster board if you want. We learn by seeing as much as by hearing.

Photocopying: We have noted in each lesson outline which pages in the manual need to be photocopied (or charted) before the next class. If the money is not available, use poster board, and have the students copy the chart themselves. Alternatively, your students may be willing to pay a few shillings a week to have their own copies made. If you have to handle money, ask one of the members of the class to volunteer to be the book-keeper. DON'T get in the business of handling money yourself. I can create suspicion that your motives may be monetary rather than spiritual. GIVE RECEIPTS for all money taken in. *"Let everything be done decently and in order."* If your students will purchase their own materials, they will appreciate what they are being given more. And, when they finish the course with copies of the material, they will be able to pass the teaching on to others. (Many of our students have been so powerfully touched by *SONSHIP* that they begin teaching others immediately!) If you are handing out sheets every week (rather than using a plastic-bound manual), require the students to purchase a file in which to keep their handouts. Otherwise, they'll forever be playing the "lost and found" game, and you'll spend half the class time trying to replace lost papers. *We learned this the hard way!*

BE PREPARED! A Few Some Very Practical Tips. . .

Have your materials ready and be on time! Have your lesson handouts (if you are not using manuals), chalk board, chalk, and copies for students, ready in the class room at least 5 minutes *BEFORE* the class begins. Enthusiasm dies quickly when the teacher is late or unprepared. Don't think of being prepared and being on time as trying to keep a rule, but as a way of *loving your students*, because that is what it is—and that is how they will feel—loved, cared for and esteemed by you.

Never stand in front of open windows or with the light behind you. Your students will not be able see you. If they are blinded by the light, let it be the light of Jesus!

Encourage Questions: Always be open for questions from your students. In fact encourage them to interrupt you to ask for clarification if they do not understand you.

If you are kind when interrupted, and answer with love and patience, you will get more questions and your students will be "with you" and enjoy learning. If you are impatient when questions are asked, people will freeze up, and eventually drop out of the class. If they don't feel loved, why be there? Encouraging questions is a way to love them.

Sometimes you will get questions that are out of place and interrupt the flow of the lesson. Sometimes they may be from antagonists, but most of the time, they will come from a good heart, but be off the subject or premature. In those cases, be very gracious. In any case, receive the question graciously, show that you want to answer it, but later in the session, or after class.

Defensiveness: We mean yours, not theirs! Remember this wonderful truth: *this is not your Gospel and you don't have to defend it!* The Holy Spirit is the One who will illuminate the hearts of your students. If you begin to feel defensive because of someone's question, or a bad attitude that is expressed (and that will happen—the questions, the attitudes, and your feelings of defensiveness), let Jesus be your righteousness. Instead of trusting your own right-ness. Look at Christ. He absorbed the hurts of men by "entrusting himself to him who does rightly." We have been teaching Sonship a long time—the USA version since 1991, and we still feel defensiveness well-up in us when a hard question is asked. That is the time to silently repent of your righteousness, and love the person. "A soft answer turns away wrath, but grievous words stir up anger." Since the Gospel is not your Gospel, you have nothing to prove. And, since you don't have any righteousness!—since Jesus is your beauty, don't try to make yourself beautiful. It won't work. You aren't, he is. Nothing shows the gentleness of Christ and your confidence in him more than your gentleness with an opponent.

Expect Opposition: Remember: you are asking your students to die to themselves! This is hard! Their flesh will fight back the way your flesh fought back and still fights back. Expect it. What are you asking them to die to? Their flesh, their desire to control their lives, their self-righteousness and self-reliance. Many of them will need to repent of the pride they have in their years of service to Christ, because they will discover that they have done most of it from wrong motives—for their own glory, for the praise of men, or to try to earn God's love! You will have the joy of seeing many repentances, and that is one of the surest signs that the Holy Spirit is at work—broken hearts.

There is joy for those who repent, but some people will fight back as they begin to realize what really believing the Gospel means they must give up. Not all will "speak well of you" or of the message of Sonship (Luke 6:26). Jesus was crucified because self-righteous religious leaders understood all-too-well what Jesus was saying about the quality of their religion (that it was false), and about the purpose of their lives (that everything they did was done for men to see — Matt. 23:5).

You are a "*righteousness thief*" because you share the Gospel that God's way of righteousness is only through Christ. If you never meet opposition, you may not have adequately presented the Gospel, because to the natural man, it is foolishness and a stumbling block.

Expect Great Fruit! On a more positive note, and for your encouragement, the great number majority of our experience in teaching the SONSHIP for AFRICA course has been received with great joy.

Expect Tears: Expect tears when people see the Father's love for them and are convicted of sin at the same time! Expect tears when they "see" Jesus crucified, risen and

interceding for them. We see "red eyes" and "wet eyes" almost every class period! The more we talk about Jesus and his love for sinners, the more tears in the eye and fruit in the life! Jesus' love softens hearts and stirs up faith which the Holy Spirit blesses with his fruit.

Another Caution: We ask for *written permission* if we want to quote the renewal testimonies of our students. They are usually happy to write them out, and we have a standard form for them to use on which they sign a release of information. This has proven a valuable resource for us and helps them verbalize what God has been doing in their lives. It also has space for their suggestions on how we can improve the course.

Be the Biggest Repenter in the Group

Jack Miller, the man who began Sonship training in 1986, always said that the leader should be the biggest repenter. What if you have nothing to share? That will rarely happen! We are all big sinners, and as the Spirit keeps convicting you and teaching you things about Christ, yourself, and your sin, you will have plenty of fresh material to share from! Because you are living a life of ongoing repentance, you will usually be able to think of a temptation you have faced, a disagreement with a friend, a hurt from a brother, sister, spouse, classmate, etc.

Be wise as you share your own sins. The point is not to "protect your righteousness"—but to protect the feelings of your students. You want to *win* them, not offend them. See page S10-10 in "Repentance as a Way of Life" for a few tips.

Be careful about sharing the sins of others, or embarrassing your family. It is a mark of love to *ask permission* before telling someone else's story.

Repent of your repentances! Jack Miller also said, "*We even need to repent of our repentances*" since we can become proud of how good we are at repenting. Many times after a particularly satisfying SONSHIP session, we experience ugly attacks of spiritual pride. Our hearts can very quickly become over how wonderful SONSHIP is, and what good communicators of grace we are. Too, we can begin looking down on others who have not had the course. We need to keep the Spirit to "show us our sin" so that we can keep a broken, humble, teachable heart. It is not unusual that the Father has to take us through a fresh time of brokenness before he can use us in a powerful way in the lives of others. The Apostle Paul said he was given his thorn so that he would not be lifted up in pride (II Cor. 12). Watch over your heart. Ask others to pray for you. Pray Psalms 51 and 139 often.

Follow the schedule we outline next—if possible. But, be pliable. Realize that people, not schedule, are most important.

The interaction of your students in their small groups and with you personally will help them to work in and work out the concepts they are hearing. *Let them question and share!*

It is more important to cover the *core concepts* of the lesson than to read over every single item in the lesson. *Don't "miss the forest while looking at the trees."*

As you are open about your struggles, friendly, warm, and approachable in your manner, you will enable your students to be open and honest and to express their thoughts, feelings and needs. As they do, their learning will be enhanced as the Holy Spirit works the truths of the Gospel deep into their hearts. We are aiming for PERMANENT CHANGE, not the transfer of mere information or some temporary "spiritual high."

Suggested Schedule for a Sonship Session

I. **Lecture** (with discussion encouraged) 30–45 minutes

II. **Small Groups** 20-30 minutes

III. **Sharing in the Large Group** 20 minutes

IV. **Grace Assignments explained** 10 minutes

Note: Depending on the group dynamics during each session, grace assignments and small group activities may be interchanged. Be ready to make changes to benefit learning.

B. An Outline and Directions for Teaching Each of the Sixteen Sonship Lessons

PART ONE: THE JOURNEY FROM ORPHANHOOD TO SONSHIP

Purpose of Part One: "From—To": To move your students from being satisfied with mere Bible knowledge about God and his Word, into a fellowship of loving dependence on him as their ABBA-Father, through Christ, by the power of the Spirit.

Lessons in Part One:

- S-1 ORPHANS VS. SONS**
- S-2 A DAUGHTER BECOMES A SON**
- S-3 A SON MEETS WITH HIS FATHER IN THE MORNING**

S-1 ORPHANS VS. SONS

Goal of the Lesson: Three-fold

1. To remember God's chief purpose in Salvation: Ezekiel 36:22-27; Ephesians 1:4-6, 11-14.
2. To see how our negative response hurts His purpose: John 5: 41-44
3. To understand how our Sonship answers this: Galatians 3:1-5; 4:4-7; 6:14; John 14:18

Outline of the Lesson:

Welcome to Sonship!

Introduction - Always state the goal and read the scriptures.

I. Discovering God's purpose for the Gospel: His own glory among the nations

II. New Heart failure: Its Cause, Cost and Cure

Its cause: our boasting in our own righteousness

Its cost: Loss of joy and duty filled kingdom building

Its cure: Entering into sonship with our Father

III. Introduction of Orphans vs. Sons list:

You should read and comment on several of the listings that have characterized your life, and encourage the class to do the same in their Small Group workshop.

Small Groups: Complete the workshop that follows the Orphans vs. Son list.

Grace Assignments:

1. Read the "End of the Struggle" article and complete the workshop.
2. Read the article "Sonship is for Daughters Too"
3. Post the Tongue Assignment in a prominent place in your home. Notice how unable you are to keep it. This is a window into your inability to keep the law of love—even with your tongue!
4. Be prepared to share with your leader or in your small group, some of the areas in the Orphan vs. Sons list that indicate you have been living like an "orphan".
5. Memorize: John 14:8 and Psalm 139: 23,24

Notes and observations: Make copies before for next class. We provide this place in each lesson for you to write down any important events or suggestions for improvements you want to remember from the days lesson. . facts that you want to remember from the day's lesson. Encourage your students to pray for one another in their small groups and between class times. The Orphans vs. Sons list can be a traumatic revelation to people who have been blind to the true condition of their hearts, especially their self-centeredness, lack of love and self-serving motives for ministry. Be sensitive to what God is doing; be ready to listen, love, encourage, and pray.

Special prayer needs:

Notes:

S-2 A DAUGHTER BECOMES A 'SON'

Goal of the Lesson: Two fold:

1. To read and hear how other Christians have been freed from lives of self-effort and lack of joy to happy sons and daughters in the kingdom.
2. To lead the students to think back over their own lives and discover how they may have learned good or bad patterns of relating to God (especially the Father), to parents, siblings, relatives, neighbors, etc. Our "sin patterns" are so deeply ingrained in us, we are blind to them, and if we do, we may think, "that's just the way I am; I can't change." When we think like that, we live as perpetual "victims" of ours, and everyone else's sin. *"He breaks the power of canceled sin; he sets the prisoner free!"* (Hymn: *O' For a Thousand Tongues to Sing* — Charles Wesley)

Key Scriptures: Galatians 3:1-5; Romans 10:1-4; 13: 8-10; Psalm 139: 23-24

Teaching Tip: At the beginning of each lesson, it is advisable to open with a few connecting thoughts from the former lesson, asking a question or two to give the students an opportunity to share something from their homework.

Outline of the Lesson:

- I. **Personal Testimony:** *"The Incarnational Principle"* — It is important for you, the teacher, to share "your story" describing how you are or have moved from living as an orphan to learning to live as a loved son or daughter. The students will be blessed by reading the stories of others in the manual, but those are "paper people." They need to see and hear a flesh and blood sinner share how God has touched them. If you are married, it will be helpful for your spouse to speak to the class on this day, if God has worked in them a significant way.
- II. **Small Group:** Give the students 20 minutes to read the testimonies in the manual. **Small Groups:** Give time for sharing from the grace assignments of last week. They may begin work on their time lines here, and or you may want to discuss the *Orphans vs. Sons* list again.

Grace Assignments:

1. Complete any unfinished assignments from S-1
2. Read the enclosed testimonies.
3. Complete "My Time Line"
4. Encourage the students to pray for the Holy Spirit to "Show me my sin". Psalm 39: 23-24
5. Memorize Galatians 4:4-7

Notes: Make copies for the students before next class time

Special prayer needs:

PART TWO:

THE SINFULNESS OF SIN AND THE SOURCE OF OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS

Purpose of Part Two:

To lead us to a renewed awe and love for the work of Christ on our behalf, in the face of our renewed understanding of our inability to keep the whole law.

Lessons In Part Two:

- S-4 LAW, LEGALISM, AND THE GOSPEL AT WAR**
- S-5 UNDERSTANDING THE SINFULNESS OF SIN**
- S-6 ACTIVE VS. PASSIVE RIGHTEOUSNESS**
- S-7 BELIEVE IN ORDER TO BE HOLY**

S-4: LAW, LEGALISM AND THE GOSPEL AT WAR

Goal of the Lesson: To understand that outward (and mere inward) obedience to the Ten Commandments falls short of the New Commandment given to us by Christ, the "Royal Law" of love.

Key Scriptures: Matthew 22:37-40; John 13:34-35; Ephesians 5:1-2; 1 John 3:16-18

Outline: Introduction - Goal and Scriptures

- I. How do Law, legalism and the Gospel compare? Differ?
- II. What are the three levels of the law; what is true holiness?
- III. What is "Authentic Christ likeness?" The Look of Love.

The diagram on p. () must be displayed for everyone to see. It is not necessary for all the texts to be included on the large drawing. You begin by comparing Christ's love to the actions of His disciples, using the passages in the text, from the lowest level first and moving up to the top.

Example: "Jesus *looked AT* the blind man and the children, treating them as worthwhile individuals, whereas the disciples *talked ABOUT* them as though they were non-persons, and interruptions to the 'real business' of Jesus."

As you lecture, ask the students questions to help you fill in the blanks on the chart. The levels are LOOKING, COMPASSION, BURDEN BEARING, DEATH TO SELF, and ONENESS. Explain how this is a picture of how Jesus loved us in the Gospel and we are to love like that. Apply this to all our closest relationships...husband, wife, children, friends, and yes... unbelievers.

Pray for spiritual sensitivity to what the Holy Spirit is doing your student's lives. This is a powerful lesson because your student's trust in the law for sanctification will be shattered. They will see they cannot keep it, because Jesus' love shows us the true fulfillment of the law. Students are often under deep conviction of sin and the realization that they have been miserably failing when they thought they had been succeeding. This is good! NOW, at last, they are needy sinners who

need Christ and the Spirit again. Some will be deeply convicted of sin, and you will need to allow time for discussion, or seek some out after class.

Encourage them to humble themselves and seek God's forgiveness for where they have failed, and, the power of Gospel faith so that they can begin to change. Some may need to write letters of apology... others may need to ask the Father to strengthen them to forgive and accept themselves as loved, accepted by, delighted in, and forgiven by him.

Small Groups: Law, Legalism and the Gospel - Worksheet. (p.)

Grace Assignments:

1. Memorize Romans 13:8-10
2. Prayerfully take steps to seek forgiveness from those against whom you have sinned in not loving as Christ loved you.

Notes and observations: Make copies before for next class. As the small groups work, you, the teacher, need to walk around encouraging the students to keep moving along.

Special prayer needs:

S-5: UNDERSTANDING THE SINFULNESS OF SIN

A Workshop

Goal of the Lesson:

To see whether sin is merely breaking rules or failing to love?

Key Scripture: Roman 7:6 "THE SINFULNESS OF SIN" worksheet is on page S5-4. The Scripture texts needed to "work" the worksheet are on the two pages following. If everyone does not have a copy, try to provide at least one copy for each small group.

How to Lead the Workshop: (There is no lecture.)

1. **Read (highlight the main points) pp. S5-2, 3** to the class to set the stage for the workshop.
2. **Begin the class by drawing fig. 5-2 on the board.** Use the tree on page S1-2 to label your tree. Explain: the leaves and fruit are outward (visible) behaviors (have the class name a few of them, and put them on the tree); the trunk represents our emotions or feelings (list some emotions by the trunk); and the roots represent our heart and motives—the "roots of sin"—the place where spiritual battles are fought and won or lost. **THE ROOT DETERMINES THE FRUIT!**
3. **Divide the class into small groups** unless your total class is 5 or less. (Have them "count off" to divide the group, the way your class did for this workshop.) Groups of six or less are best to encourage participation.
4. **Explain how the Workshop works:** (1) Assign each group one of the "outward sins" from the list on the top of the page, left-hand column. (2) Allow each group 30–45 minutes (Depending on the amount of class time you have. You will need 35–40 minutes for your "wrap up.") work through "their sin." (3) Each group will pick a spokesperson to report their findings to the class as a whole. (4) The Scriptures necessary to do the worksheet are on the following pages. (5) Show them that the left-hand column looks at the sin; the middle column analyzes how the law tries to fight it, and the right-hand column shows "the sinfulness of sin" (the failure to love), and how the Gospel can deal with the sin.
5. **GET TO WORK!** You must move around the groups to see that they keep moving! They will tend to spend the entire 30 minutes on the first column, and miss getting to the real meat of the lesson! Here you will need to be a real Pharisee. **GIVE THEM THE LAW!** If they still fail (and they usually do, you do the wrap-up).
6. **Reconvene the large group.** Hopefully you will have a blackboard to record their findings. If not, ask for volunteer "scribes." Divide the board into as many columns as you have groups, and have the spokesperson from each group report their responses: internal motivations, external, and payoff, for each sin. Let each group report **ON EACH ITEM**—not all three at once. This keeps everyone involved.

- 7. Analyze how the law tries to stop the sin. GET THEIR INPUT!** Make this a real “give and take” process. IT SHOULD BE FUN! Notice the similarities in motive at the root level are similar, no matter what the sin is at the fruit level. (This is a real revelation!) Students are almost always amazed at how the law is impotent to stop the sin (Rom. 8:1–4), but the Gospel exposes the deep root of the sin, and at the same time, offers a real solution by the sinner trusting in the righteousness of Christ.

Observations: This lesson is a powerful eye-opener to the uselessness of “throwing the law” at sin. If the law had worked, God would not have given us the Gospel!

In this lesson, your students will come to understand WHY they have been sinning certain sins, and why trying to stop them could not fight them—you can’t lop bad fruit off of a bad tree, and expect it to grow good fruit. The Gospel goes to the root of sin, and removes its guilt by the blood of Christ, and its power by the Holy Spirit through ongoing faith in Christ.

Because the lesson helps you define sin as “a failure to love,” you get to the heart of the law of God to see “the love beneath the rule” as well as “the sin beneath the sin.”

Be sure to explain “The Ripple Effect.” We have never had a class guess who the “big loser” is—never! They should know, because you started S-1 with an analysis of Ezekiel 36:22ff, but they don’t remember! Hold them in suspense. Have someone in the class read Ezekiel 36:22 aloud. Big surprise! God is the big loser, since our lovelessness robs him of the glory we could be giving him through our lives.

The Christian life, we keep forgetting, is not first of all about us and our comfort and our joy and our holiness — but about the glory of God!

To close the lesson:

1. Ask the class what hit them the hardest during the workshop (ask for one-sentence responses).
2. Lead the class in prayer and ask the Spirit again for conviction of sin on the motive level of our lives.

Grace assignments:

1. Memorize Romans 7:6
2. Review all memory work

Notes and observations: Make copies before for next class.

Special prayer needs:

S-6 ACTIVE VS. PASSIVE RIGHTEOUSNESS

Goal of the Lesson:

To search the "unsearchable riches" of God's grace to us in Christ. He gave us his Son "that we might be made the righteousness of God in him" (II Cor. 5:21b).

Key Scriptures: I John 3:1; II Corinthians 5:21; Romans 1:16-17; 5:1

Outline: NOTE: This lesson presents *the cornerstone* upon which the Christian faith stands! The doctrinal terms may seem complicated, but their content is not, and it is critical that they be understood. Review the *Justification Quiz* (S6-6) and the two definitions of justification you wrote out when you took *SONSHIP* (to keep you humble!). Be sure to emphasize that our sanctification is based on the foundation of our free justification. We are declared righteous, are accepted by God, and therefore have the Holy Spirit and are able to grow. Without justification, none of the rest could follow.

Introduction: You need to read and thoroughly digest pages S6-1, S6-2. Then read Martin Luther's *Argument to the Galatians* (Appendix A). To help you get hold of what Luther is saying, write down his key points. *This is not "children's bread."* It can be heavy going, but it is well worth the effort.

Note the *Outline of Galatians and Answers* (pp. S6-10 – S6-13). This is a helpful study guide to walk you through the book. You might want to use it as a stand-alone teaching series! (The answers are on page S6-14.) Dr. Jack Miller used to say that understanding the book of Galatians is the first business of anyone who wants to disciple others. The Galatian heresy concerned Christians who were trying to use the ceremonial law to sanctify themselves. Here in Africa (as elsewhere), we are bedeviled by lists of rules that "must be kept" for your profession of faith to be recognized, for you to join the church, or for you to be considered "sanctified." This is the sort of grace-killing legalism that *SONSHIP* was designed to hit head-on and destroy. *Christ is our righteousness!*

- I. Active vs. Passive righteousness explained
- II. The 2 Big Questions in *SONSHIP*: How do I get saved and keep saved, and, how can I grow in holiness?
- III. A four step exercise to be "walked through" with the class (Preferably each student should have his own copy of the steps.)
- IV. Question and answer time — the whole class

Grace assignment: Make it your goal to thoroughly read and study the book of Galatians.

Notes and observations: Make copies before for next class.

Special prayer needs:

PART THREE: THE MEANS OF SANCTIFICATION

The Same Faith that Justifies Sanctifies

Purpose of Part Three: In this part III of Sonship we will see that the dynamic relationship of faith in Christ is what empowers us to be holy. Jesus meant it when He said, "apart from me, you can do nothing" (Jn. 15:4,5).

Lessons In Part Three

- S-7 I BELIEVE IN ORDER TO BE HOLY
- S-8 THE NORMAL CHRISTIAN LIFE
- S-9 DEFEATING THE FLESH

S-7: I Believe In Order to Be Holy

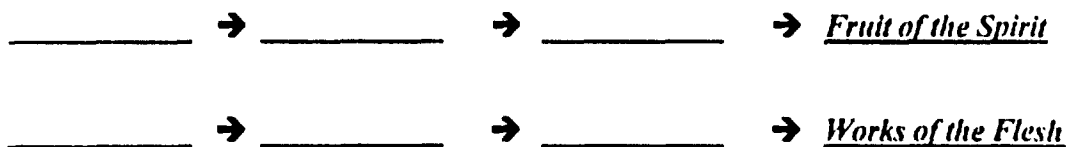
Goal: To see that the fruit of the Spirit comes from preaching the gospel, not the Law.

Key Scriptures: Galatians 3:1-5; 5:19-23; Colossians 2:6,7

Before class, carefully study the "How to Change" chart (p. S7-6) so that you can present it clearly and forcefully to the class in your own words. If you must read it aloud, do so with feeling and emphasis! *This chart is one of the most powerful rebuttals of legalism in SONSHIP, and a great motivation to consider a new style of Gospel ministry!*

Teaching the "How to Change" Chart: (Looking at sanctification BACKWARDS!)

1. Draw *just the lines* of the chart as it is in your manual. (It may take you two tries to get it right with the arrows in between each section if you're not a great artist.) DO put the Scriptures on the far right—the fruit of the spirit on top, the works of the flesh below:



ASK: "What is the one thing you should do more of, to grow in your Christian life?"

Take notes of their responses in a small corner on the board. NOBODY will offer the correct response: "believe more," or, "believe the Gospel" more.

Have someone read Galatians 5:19-23 aloud. Define "growth" (sanctification) as "manifesting the fruit of the Spirit," or "being like Jesus," etc.

2. **ASK:** "Would anybody NOT like to see the fruit of the Spirit in you family, your church family, and in your own life?" (MAKE THIS FUN!) Do you see the Spirit's fruit in abundance in those places now? Or...?

3. NOW ASK: "What about the fruit of the flesh?" (Gal. 5:19) "Do you see those things popping up in yourself, your family and your church right now?" (By the time you are this far along in SONSHIP, you will probably get some painfully honest answers.)

4. Now begin moving to the left on the chart, ALTERNATING FROM TOP TO BOTTOM, and ask, "Where does the fruit of the Spirit come from? Yes, the from the Spirit." Fill in the blank. Ask, "Where does the Flesh come from?" etc.

When you get to the KEY QUESTION: "Where does the Spirit come from," you will either hear a resounding silence or a bunch of wild guesses! This is where you read Galatians 3:5 and do a short exposition of how faith in Christ gives the Spirit. Verse 5 is the key. Continue in this way until you have moved all the way to the left. Be sure to emphasize that we are New Covenant Christians—not followers of Moses and the law.

The Gospel → FAITH! → The Holy Spirit → Fruit of the Spirit

The Law → Trying Harder → The Flesh → Fruit of the Flesh

5. The CLIMAX of the lesson comes when you have shown that "preaching the Gospel" gives FAITH which gives the SPIRIT which gives the FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT, and, "preaching the law" (demanding obedience to it) encourages the WORKS OF THE FLESH which comes from the FLESH which manifests the FRUITS OF THE FLESH, and, you draw the "Galatians Error- Arrow" from the lower left to the upper right and say something like this:

"The problem in our churches and families and lives is that we are trying to use THIS (preaching the law) to get THIS (the fruit of the Spirit), but, very predictably, what we get is THIS (the fruit of the Flesh). THAT is what happened in Galatia, and we are reliving their history!"

DISCUSS the implications of the chart! *Work It In!*

Small Groups: Work on the *Sanctification by Faith* workshop.

This is an important part of the lesson. Students are asked to define justification in their own words.

Don't be surprised if they still can't do it! Be patient, and help them along, remembering your utter confusion at the newness of all this when you first took SONSHIP!

Grace Assignments:

1. Read the Luther article: "Law & Letter vs. Gospel & Spirit"
2. Memorize Matthew 5:20
3. Complete any unfinished parts of the Sanctification workshop

Notes and observations: Make copies before for next class.

Special prayers needs:

S-8: THE NORMAL CHRISTIAN LIFE

Goal of the Lesson: To see that *the healthy Christian* fixes his on Jesus and relies on the Holy Spirit to empower him to "live the normal Christian life"—walking in the Spirit.

Key Scriptures: Luke 11:13; Galatians 5:15,18, 22,23, 25; Romans 8: 6,9,13-15; 7:6; Ephesians 2:28;6:18; 4:8ff; I Corinthians 12:14ff; II Corinthians 3:3,6-8; 13:14; Philippians 2:1

Understanding the Lesson: The lesson begins with an introduction, *The Role of the Spirit in Sanctification*. Study this ahead of time so that you can point out the highlights to the class. READ aloud the list showing how WE rely on the Spirit for everything in the Christian life. Total time: 10 minutes. This moves you into the big chart: *The Normal Christian Life*. Study it so that you can present it as *your truth*.

Presenting the Chart: (Take only 15 minutes and go to SMALL GROUPS.)

1. **ASK:** "What do you think the 'normal' Christian life looks like?" Encourage some brief discussion.
2. **LEAD** the class to look at the bottom section of the chart. This is the WRONG way to live. Present this first. Explain the "cycle" of failure. Ask if anyone has experienced this in their own lives. *Ask them if they are willing to share specifically.*
3. **PRESENT** the upper half as the NORMAL life of a believer. This chart may be presented in 15 minutes — or — it can be expanded for use as an entire sermon or Bible lesson. The whole SONSHIP course is right there on the page! (That is why it is so "busy" looking.) You can simplify the chart by drawing only the main symbols on a blackboard and eliminating most of the words.

Key Ideas to include:

1. The Normal Christian Life is to be lived in conscious dependence on the Holy Spirit. How? By looking to Christ by faith who gives us the Spirit.
2. We cannot produce the fruits of the Spirit by making resolutions and trying harder.
3. God's solution to the flesh is the Gospel.
4. We "walk in Christ" (Col. 2:6) by taking the "Two Steps" of the Gospel—repent ("I am a big sinner.") and, and believe the Gospel ("Jesus died for me")
5. "Walking by the Spirit" is the same as "depending on Christ," or "looking to Christ." THIS is the key to bearing the fruit of the Spirit. The Spirit empowers us, or "fills" us. In response to our faith in Christ (Gal. 3:1-5).

Small Groups: 1 Hour. Read through "KEEPING IN STEP WITH THE SPIRIT" (Share the reading in the group.) Then, answer the "Workshop" questions on page S8-13. **THIS is the most important part of this session!** It shows PRACTICALLY what "walking in the Spirit" does.

Grace assignments: Memorize Galatians 5:16

Notes and observations: Make copies before for next class.

Special Prayer needs:

S-9 DEFEATING THE FLESH: How Spiritual Growth Looks and Feels: "The Cross Chart"

Goal of the Lesson: To realize that "being more holy" does not depend on faith in Christ—not how good we feel about our spiritual life. Paul had a *greater* sense of his sin as he grew older and more like Jesus! The spiritually mature Christian will feel like more of a sinner the more holy he actually becomes. (Romans 7)

Key Scriptures: Luke 7:36-47; I Corinthians 15:9; Ephesians 3:8; I Timothy 1:15

Understanding the Lesson: Read J. I. Packer on page S9-1. Excellent material! The lesson itself is built around 4 charts, and if possible, should be presented on a chalk board. (And hand out photocopies of the charts if possible.) Study the charts before class so that you can present them with ease. If you are FUZZY on what they teach, well... As the old saying goes: "A mist in the pulpit is a fog in the pew."

Presenting the Four Charts: (If time is limited, explain *only* the first two!)

1. *The Paradox of Growth in Holiness* (p. S9-2) chart can be presented in 10-12 minutes. Use the Scriptures and questions to assist in making this clear. Be sure to emphasize the difference between our *feeling* holy and our actually *being* holy.
2. *The Cross Chart* (p. S9-4) is the central part of this lesson and will take 20-25 minutes to present. IMPORTANT: This graphic is a bit confusing at first, so *make clear that the shaded portions represent what is hidden from our spiritual sight*—God's holiness (above) and our sinfulness (below).
Remember to entertain questions as you teach these important charts, and deal with the students in gentleness. USE YOUR FAILURES to illustrate the truths on the charts. As you do, your disciples will find it easier to examine their own hearts.
3. The *How to Act like a Son* chart (p. S9-5) is to be read over with the class. Don't get bogged down in all the text; hit the highlights. KEY: *You can't bypass the Gospel and get to "4" from "2" by trying!* When you become familiar with the concepts, just draw the four boxes on the board and share the main points.
4. The *Why Our eyes are not Fixed on Jesus* chart (p. S9-6) is designed to touch on the source of our spiritual defeat from yet another angle. You will see parallels here with the "Pharisee and Failure" model article from S-2 (pp. S2-5, 6).

Small groups: Read and work through the workshop on Romans 7

Grace assignments:

1. Read *Who I Am in Christ* (p. S9-7) and complete the Romans 7 Q&A (pp. S9-8,9).
2. Read the article *The Flesh* by Jack Miller (p. S9-10).
3. Memorize Hebrews 12:2. Review all memory work by saying the verses aloud in unison—the way you did when you were lowly Standard One students! *It's fun!*

Notes and observations: Make copies before for next class.

Special prayer needs:

PART FOUR: FAITH ACTIONS OF SONS AND DAUGHTERS

"Sonship in Shoes"

Purpose of part four: To see how the Gospel impacts all of life. "THERE IS A BETTER WAY TO LIVE!" The Holy Spirit wants to empower us to serve in love rather than duty.

Lessons in Part Four:

- S-10 REPENTANCE AS A WAY OF LIFE
- S-11 THE LOVE PROJECT: AIMING TO LOVE THE DIFFICULT PEOPLE IN YOUR LIFE
- S-12 FORGIVENESS AS A WAY OF LIFE: LEARNING MERCY FOR THE GUILTY
- S-13 CONSTRUCTIVE CONFLICT: LEARNING TO FIGHT LIKE CHRISTIANS: SO THAT GOD WINS
- S-14 LAW VS. GOSPEL IN HOME AND CLOSE RELATIONSHIPS
- S-15 GOSPEL MANNERS: CHRISTIAN LOVE AND CULTURAL EXPECTATIONS
- S-16 BROKENNESS: A NEW PARADIGM FOR MINISTRY: Gospel treasure in jars of clay

S-10 REPENTANCE AS A WAY OF LIFE

Goal of the Lesson: To realize that daily repentance is a normal and necessary part of a healthy Christian's life. We sin a lot (fall to love) so we need to repent a lot!

Key Scriptures: Psalm 139:23,24; Psalm 51

Outline of the Lesson:

Introduction Read the purposes of the lesson aloud (p. S10-2). Walk through the lesson. Ask questions, share, and invite discussion and responses. **CAUTION:** Be sure to emphasize that for the believer, repentance is for cleansing—not "getting saved" again!

- I. Why "Lifestyle repentance" sounds strange to us
- II. Repentance is not optional
- III. What Biblical repentance is and is not.
- IV. How change takes place
- V. The fruits of genuine repentance

Small Groups:

- 1. Study *Proud Hearts/Broken Hearts* (S10-13,14). Share three items you struggle with. Why?
- 2. Complete the *Repentance Workshop* on page S10-20.

Grace Assignments:

- 1. Read "Walking in the Light" (pp. S10-15 to 19)
- 2. Read Spurgeon's comments on repentance (S10-12).
- 3. Memorize James 4: 6,10.

Teaching tips: By the time you arrive at this point in the course, hopefully the Holy Spirit will be doing a deep work of renewal in you and your students. (Remember, SONSHIP is the one course you never graduate from!) Because of the Spirit's work, the atmosphere in the class is probably such that these last 7 sessions will be full of laughter and encouragement as well as deep conviction. These practical lessons will help you get the theory of sonship out of the clouds and onto the street—"sonship in shoes." You will begin to see what a faith-walk with Christ LOOKS like "in your closest" and your everyday relationships. It will PUSH you to reach out of yourself to love the unloveable, believers, especially unbelievers in grace-centered evangelism.

One trap to avoid at this point is for YOU to take the place of the Holy Spirit. You have become a "GRACE GURU" to them now, and perhaps the spiritual mother or father of some. They will now look to you to apply the "magic" of sonship to every situation in their lives. Don't take the bait! Help THEM think through their painful or complex situations by asking questions that will point them in the direction of Christ and the Gospel. Help them discern their root sins, their responsibility in conflict situations (where it is always the *other* person's fault), etc. You will also ENJOY this new Guru status, so watch your flesh at this point. Don't be "Answer Man" or "Answer Woman" who tells them every step in the change process. (Don't take the place of faith, prayer, and the Holy Spirit in their lives.) Remember: It FEELS GOOD to be the expert, and to have people relying on you as "the fountain of wisdom." Resist the temptation.

This note from my wife Becky: (She has a godly jealousy for her man!) "DON'T by any means, counsel a member of the opposite sex unless you set some clear boundaries. The deep spiritual nature of the SONSHIP material itself leads to personal intimacy with others. Especially be cautious of being alone with students of the opposite sex, as an unhealthy dependence—or worse—may develop. (This HAS already happened once!) Refer such students to someone you know who can help them. If they persist in wanting your counsel, be sure your spouse is with you, or, if you are single, meet in a public place. "Be wise as serpents, but harmless as doves." These types of situations call for special prayer from friends, and for you to seek the Father's face in showing you any wrong motives in your heart.

Notes and observations: Make copies before for next class

Special prayer needs:

S-11: THE LOVE PROJECT

AIMING TO LOVE THE DIFFICULT PEOPLE IN YOUR LIFE

Goal of the Lesson: To understand that loving as Christ loved is the fulfillment of the law. If we are failing to love like He did, then we are not keeping in step with the Spirit, and are not maturing in our faith. *"A failure of love is a failure of faith."*

Key Scriptures: 1 John 4:7-5:2

Outline:

Introduction

I. Examine your patterns of loving

II. Workshop on loving three difficult people in your life

INSTRUCTIONS: PART ONE (p. S11-4) We always insist that spouses list *each other* as THE FIRST of the three "love targets"—even if they don't consider their spouse to be particularly "difficult". Complete all three worksheets on your three "targets" before beginning the second part of the workshop.

INSTRUCTIONS: PART TWO (p. S11-5) Make it very clear to the class that this lesson is about LOVING PEOPLE, not changing them! The order is important. The Holy Spirit MAY change someone as you love them, but there is no guarantee of that. We may not usurp the role of the Spirit.

III. Importance of Prayer *I pray and ask God to change who? ME!*

IV. Map out specific strategies for love initiatives with your three "targets"

Grace Assignment:

1. Complete the workshop.
2. Take specific steps to work on your strategies to love.
3. Enlist prayer support.
4. Memorize: Matthew 5: 44-45

Notes and observations: Make copies of your handouts before the next class.

Special prayer needs:

S-12 FORGIVENESS AS A WAY OF LIFE IMITATING GOD (BY SHOWING MERCY TO THE GUILTY)

Goal: To see how our "believing the Gospel" increases the awareness of our own sin and our ongoing forgiveness, so that we are enabled to love and forgive others.

Key Scriptures: Matthew 6:12, 14, 15; 18:21-35; Mark 11:24-25; Luke 7:47

Outline:

Introduction To set the stage for the lesson: (1) Read and briefly discuss the Rwandan genocide story to class (p. S12-2). (2) Read the author's introduction on page S12-3.

I. The Importance of Forgiveness

II. Biblical Forgiveness Defined

III. Why We Have Difficulty Forgiving Others (six problems)

IV. Our Part In the Process of Forgiveness (Note especially "moving beyond forgiveness" on page S12-10.)

V. Special Circumstances and Considerations (Reconciliation, Confrontation, Church Discipline, etc.)

VI. Immediate Action Steps for Extending Forgiveness

Small Groups: Use the last 3 pages of the lectures with it's questions and blanks to fill out as a workshop with the small groups.

Grace Assignments:

1. Read *I'm Still Learning to Forgive* by Corrie Ten Boom (S12-15, 16).
2. Memorize Ephesians 4:31-32 and Romans 5:5

Notes and observations: Make necessary photocopies before the next class

Special prayer needs:

S-13 CONSTRUCTIVE CONFLICT

LEARNING TO FIGHT LIKE CHRISTIANS: SO THAT GOD WINS

Goal: Learning to enter into Biblical conflict with others so that is exposed and repented of, reconciliation is made between aggrieved parties, love abounds, and God gets great glory!

Key Scriptures: Luke 6:39-42; Galatians 5:24-26; James 3:13-18

Outline:

Introduction: Read and discuss the African proverbs on conflict (S13-1).

Have the class look over the "church fight" stories from the *Daily Nation* (S13-2, 3).

Read the Introduction (p. S3-4) and in your own words, define "destructive" and "constructive" conflict, and explain the difference.

I. 5 Ways People Fight

II. The Goal of Constructive Conflict: the glory of God, not your winning the fight.

III. Who Can Enter into Constructive Conflict? (Who is Qualified?)

IV. Constructive and Destructive Conflict: How to Fight!

V. Primary Causes for Destructive Conflict

VI. Preparation for Constructive Conflict: Before You Jump In—or Run Away

Small Groups: Read Rose Marie Miller's letter and complete the Discussion Guide together as a group.

Grace Assignments:

1. Have your students read the *Becoming Nothing* letter (p. S13-15) and the second letter on the following page. Have them think through the questions concerning this conflict on a missionary team and look for parallels in their own lives.
2. Have the students work through the *Conflict Project* using a conflict situation from their own lives—preferably a very recent or even ongoing one.

Notes and observations: Make copies before for next class

Special prayer needs:

S-14 LAW VS. GOSPEL IN HOME AND CLOSE RELATIONSHIPS

Goal: To lead us to put the Gospel into daily practice through love, mercy and forgiveness—as opposed to letting bitterness, judgment and unforgiveness reign in our primary relationships, especially our marriages and parenting.

NOTE: Single Christians should not take this lesson lightly! As we are illustrating “Grace-Based” versus “Law-Based” relationships, virtually everything we cover will have major implications for their relationships with their parents, siblings, roommates, and friends.

Key Scriptures: Ephesians 6:4; Philippians 3:3; Colossians 3:20-21; 1 Peter 3: 1-4

Outline:

Introduction:

Discuss the “Wedding Day Dreams” illustration on page S14-1. (Have fun!) What are the potential sources of conflict in this marriage? Is the Gospel powerful enough to overcome these? HOW? (“What’s LOVE got to do with it?”)

Read the writer’s brief introduction.

- I. Changing Things In Our Homes by the Gospel**
- II. Law vs. Gospel Relationships Compared and Contrasted**
 - **Law vs. Grace Oriented Styles of Relating** (p. S14-5, 6)
 - **Law vs. Grace Oriented Homes** (p. S14-7 – 12)
- III. The Five Levels of Communication** (p. S14-13, 14)

Small Groups: Complete and return to the large group in 10 minutes

Grace assignment:

1. Read “The Five Levels of Communication” (p. S14-13) and write out answers to the 9 questions on the following page. Be ready to discuss!
2. As the Spirit has convicted you of ways you have been harsh with those close to you, either in your family or your friends, go to them and ask forgiveness. Get your small group and others to pray for you.

Notes and observations: Before the class period, study these pages S14-1 to 11. Mark the key points the Spirit impresses your that your group needs. Give copies of these pages to the class as you begin the session, read them aloud (taking turns), and encourage discussion!

Special prayer needs:

S-15 GOSPEL MANNERS: CHRISTIAN LOVE AND CULTURAL EXPECTATIONS

Goal: To understand that because loving others is the fulfillment of the law, learning and observing the social customs of those around us is a way to show them that we love and care for them—i.e. good manners are a fruit of Gospel faith!

Key Scriptures: Luke 7:44,45; Romans 12:21; 1 Corinthians 13:2; Galatians 5:22

Outline:

Introduction - Solicit comments on the proverb and picture on page S15-1.

Study the author's introduction ahead of time (pp. S15-2, 3) and be prepared to point out the main points. (You might want to read it aloud, having each student take one paragraph.)

I. What are "Manners"? Manners Defined.

II. Hindrances to Good Manners (Lead the class through these.)

III. Manners Project: Small Groups Since this is a long, involved workshop, each group may be assigned a different section of the material to complete. Come back together after 30 minutes, and have each group share their findings.

IV. The Practice of Gospel Manners (p. S15-11— If there is time, lead the class through this. If not (and there probably will not be) give the remainder as a home assignment.

Grace Assignment:

1. Complete any part of the lesson that was not completed and be ready to share with the class at the beginning of the next session.
2. Memorize 1 Corinthians 13:2

Notes and Observations: Make copies before for next class

Special prayer needs:

S-16 BROKENNESS: A NEW PARADIGM FOR MINISTRY

Gospel treasure in jars of clay

Goal: To believe so thoroughly in Jesus' words, "apart from Me you can do nothing," that our labors of ministry in preaching, discipling, leadership training, evangelism, etc. will be done with tender, broken and contrite hearts before God and men.

Key Scriptures: John 13:2-17; II Corinthians 4:6-7; 12:1-10; Phillippines 2:1-9

Outline:

Introduction: Read to the class.

I. A Personal Confession and Call to Self-Examination. Note: If at all possible, you should use your own story here, perhaps comparing it to the ideas contained in the lesson. You must "earn the right" to call others to brokenness by setting the example yourself.

II. The Root of our Resistance to a Ministry of Brokenness

III. How a Ministry of Brokenness Feels and Looks

Small groups: This being the last session, spend time in free discussion of the lecture and it's implications for the on-going work in the lives of the members in each group. Encourage each student to verbalize specifically how they intend to minister out of weakness so that the power of Christ may be seen in them. Pray for one another.

Discuss: "Will this model of brokenness 'work' in Africa?" Why or why not? What is the alternative to ministering out of brokenness? Do people prefer that? Why? *Does God?*

Grace Assignment:

1. Ask the Father to keep breaking you. Ask others to pray for you as well.
2. Read the Appendix on Warfare Praying
3. Read Luther's "Argument to the Galatians"
4. Memorize Proverbs 4:23; Jeremiah 17:9; Phillippines 3:3 These passages will remind you that even in your repentances, you will need to repent. Our hearts are deceitful and desperately wicked. Develop the habit of putting no confidence in your flesh.
5. Ask the Father to use you in the Kingdom and open doors for you to share what you have learned in Sonship.
6. Write out, if you so desire, a testimony of what the Father has taught you in the SONSHIP FOR AFRICA course. As you have been blessed by the story of His work in others, so your story will bless others.

Notes and observations: Give your students an opportunity to share with the class and ask for their written permission in speaking about their lives to others before you do so.

Special prayer needs:



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VITA

The author of this work is John Wade Long, Jr.. Born to Dr. John Wade Long and Mary Elizabeth (Leonard) Long on 23rd September, 1942, in Tampa, Florida, he received his formal education in the Jackson, Mississippi Public Schools where he graduated from William B. Murrah High School in 1960. He was awarded the Bachelor of Arts degree from Belhaven College in 1965 with a major in Biblical Studies and a minor in Philosophy. In 1965 he married Rebecca Ann Morse, daughter of The Rev. Frank Rogan Morse and Margaret (Belote) Morse of Birmingham, Alabama. He enrolled in Gordon Divinity School in Wenham, Massachusetts (1965) and transferred the following year to the newly founded Reformed Theological Seminary in Jackson, Mississippi, where he was awarded the Master of Divinity degree in 1968 in its first graduating class.

He served as a minister to youth in churches Virginia and in South Florida and was ordained into the Gospel ministry in 1970 by the Presbytery of the Everglades of the Presbyterian Church in the United States (PCUS). In 1972 he transferred to the Reformed Presbyterian Church Evangelical Synod (RPCES) to seek missionary service in Africa, and served from 1973 to 1977 as a church planter in Kenya, East Africa under World Presbyterian Mission, the mission board of the RPCES.

In 1977 he returned to the USA and transferred to the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA), and served churches in Mississippi and Alabama (Altadena Valley PCA in Birmingham, 1981-1992). In January 1992 the Longs sensed God's call of God to return to Africa. In 1993, John, his wife Becky, and their youngest child, Elizabeth (b. 1982), moved to Kenya, East Africa. Their two older children, John III (b. 1969) and Rebecca Elizabeth Lance (b. 1973 in Nairobi) reside in the United States.

Working under a cooperative agreement with Mission to the World (PCA), and World Harvest Mission of Philadelphia, Long is based in Nairobi, a center for Christian education on the continent. He is tasked with developing renewal curricula, and discipling African church leaders so that they become agents of spiritual renewal in their countries of origin. Part II of this thesis, *SONSHIP for Africa: The Discipleship Course for Disciplers*, is the core curriculum of his ministry. His studies are due to be completed in May of 1998.